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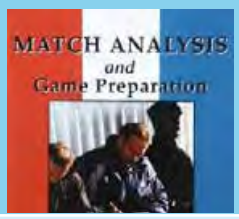

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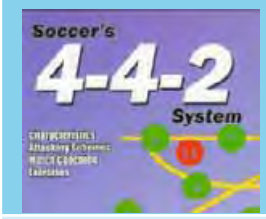

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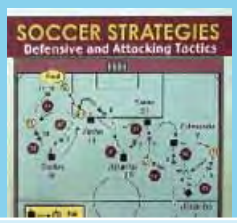

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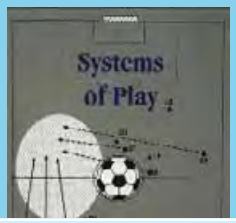

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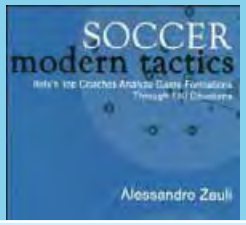

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comment

THE EYES OF the world will be on Leipzig on December 9 as the 32 World Cup qualifiers discover their fate at the finals draw. FIFA president Sepp Blatter, being the shrinking violet that he is, will no doubt force himself on stage to act as master of ceremonies.

The highlights of the qualifying campaign are sure to be celebrated. The coaching achievements of Guus Hiddink with Australia and Leo Beenhakker with Trinidad & Tobago will be feted, and rightly so. But the real stars of the show – other than Blatter, of course – should be the players. Yet how many of the really big names will still be standing six months later, at the opening game of the World Cup in Munich's stunning new Allianz Arena?

France's 2002 World Cup campaign was fatally wounded by Zinedine Zidane's lack of fitness, while eventual semi-finalists South Korea had neither greater technical ability nor better tactical knowledge than other sides, but simply superior levels of fitness. Ditto Greece at Euro 2004.

In Japan, two days after Leipzig, FIFA will re-launch the Club World Championship. So, just after celebrating the wonders of the international game, FIFA will continue its efforts to muscle in on the club game, thus adding to a fixture pile-up that it has committed itself to reducing. Work that one out. Many of the players will wonder what on earth they are doing there – like Liverpool's Steven Gerrard, whose season began on July 13 and had already included 21 games by mid-November, and his team-mate Djibril Cisse (27 games and counting). Both could easily end up playing more than 60 games by June, but will be expected to appear fit and fresh in Germany.

Meanwhile, the issue of compensation for clubs whose players are injured on international duty has created a bandwagon that has been leapt upon with glee by the G-14 group of European "superclubs" – the same group who are quite happy to drag their players across continents and through time zones in pursuit of dollars and yen.

FIFA and G-14 are equally to blame for the impasse, but dialogue and a recognition of what football stands to lose are needed. At the moment, we run the risk of a World Cup at which the stars arrive exhausted, a tournament where talent and flair could lose out to muscle and doping.

PINI ZAHAVI

In the Financial Football column of our October 2005 issue we incorrectly stated that Pini Zahavi, the well-known football agent, was an unlicensed agent. We are happy to confirm that Mr Zahavi is a fully licensed agent with the Israeli FA and FIFA and we apologise to Mr Zahavi for any embarrassment caused.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com)

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WORLD CUP DRAW

Australia, the Czech Republic, Spain, Switzerland and Trinidad & Tobago were the last five teams to qualify for Germany 2006. They join the other names in the draw in Leipzig on December 9. **Page 28**

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SCOTLAND: The Edinburgh club and their controversial Lithuanian owner Vladimir Romanov are disrupting the status quo. **Page 6**

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GERMANY: A number of Bundesliga clubs are enjoying success with coaches from the former DDR. **Page 50**

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TURKEY: A record number of managers have been sacked by top-flight clubs. **Page 56**

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SPAIN: The unheralded Basque side went top of La Liga having put their faith in youth players and squad rotation. **Page 20**

● 27/10/05

Centre of attention…Paul Gascoigne becomes manager of non-League Kettering Town following a takeover of the club by the former England player's consortium

● 29/10/05

Downcast…Man Utd's Alan Smith and Mickael Silvestre show their dejection after Middlesbrough score the final goal of their 4-1 League win

HEADLINERS

VLADIMIR ROMANOV

The Lithuanian multi-millionaire shaking up Scottish football

LITHUANIAN FINANCIER Vladimir Romanov believes that "conflict is a positive sign", and his reign at Hearts this season has been characterised by success and bloodshed in equal measure. One thing is certain: his arrival on the scene has galvanised the previously snore-inducing world of the Scottish Premier League, where Old Firm groundhog day had been the only show on offer.

Underwritten by loans from Ukio Bankas, the banking group of which Romanov is the main shareholder, and bolstered by cash from his personal fortune, estimated at £260million, Hearts have disrupted the status quo, making a raft of quality signings and storming to the top of the table.

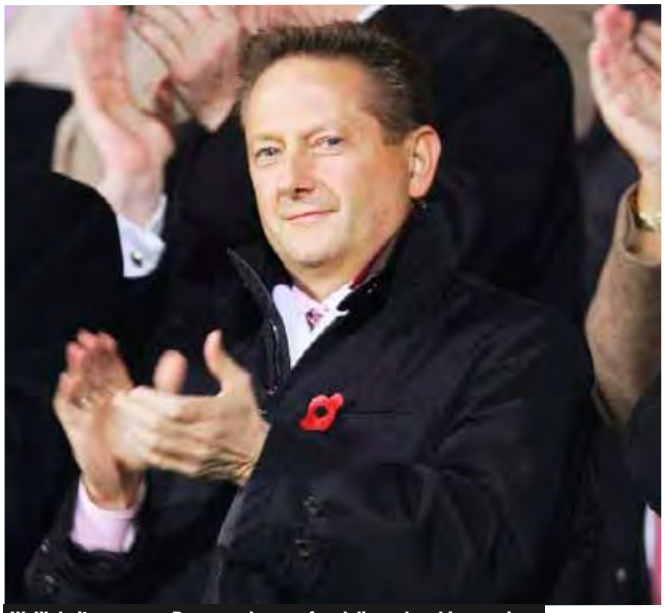
But that was not enough to satisfy Romanov, who wants beautiful football as well as points. First, manager George Burley left because of the owner's interference in team affairs. Shortly afterwards, Romanov sacked chief executive Phil Anderton, prompting the resignation of chairman George Foulkes, previously the Lithuanian's biggest cheerleader.

Romanov is irked by his continual depiction as a poor man's Abramovich, pointing out that, unlike Chelsea's oligarch ingenue, his involvement with football goes back some 15 years. A burgeoning empire started with hometown club Kaunas and then MTZ-Ripo of Belarus. Rumours in Russia link Romanov to Saturn Ramenskoye, while he is also interested in Georgians Torpedo Kutaisi.

> **'Romanov's desire to take a hands-on role in Hearts' recruitment policy has certainly caused friction'**

Romanov explained his rationale thus: "When you have three clubs it means you can move players around to gradually prepare them for the next move up the ladder, and test them at different levels. The first signs of this bearing fruit have already been demonstrated with the move of two Lithuanians [Saulius Mikoliunas and Marius Kizys] from Kaunas to Hearts." Two more Lithuanians – Deividas Cesnauskis and Edgaras Jankauskas – and Czech Roman Bednar have since been signed by Kaunas before being immediately loaned to Hearts.

Romanov's claim that he was drawn to Scotland by the passion of the fans is only part of the story, of course. Having flirted with the possibility of buying into both Dundee clubs, he soon realised that the Scottish capital offered far more potential. Edinburgh's position as Europe's fifth largest financial capital offers synergies with his banking interests and coincides neatly with Lithuania's accession to the European Union and the new business opportunities that will afford. Hearts, then in dire straits and on the verge of selling their beloved Tynecastle to housing developers, were all too willing to embrace him.But the suspicion among fans and media is understandable, especially as Hearts' debts have simply been transferred to Ukio bank at a preferential interest rate.



We'll do it my way…Romanov has, so far, delivered on his promises

Reports that Romanov had fallen out with Burley because he wanted to pick the team are wide of the mark, but his desire to take a hands-on role in the recruitment policy certainly caused friction. Two signings, Samuel Camazzola and Ibrahim Tall, were made without Burley's say-so. Romanov's justification is that if he is building the house, he wants to approve the choice of materials.

Romanov wants a sporting director working in tandem with a first-team coach – a role now being filled by surprise appointment Graham Rix – ensuring a clear division of scouting/signing and coaching/selection duties, not least to curb the influence of agents, whom he regards as the scourge of football.

The Lithuanian insists that the Champions League – not just participation but winning it – is a realistic goal for Hearts within a matter of years. It sounds far-fetched but so far he has delivered on his promises. One thing is sure, seatbelts remain firmly attached for a rollercoaster ride.

Gus Marwood

● 29/10/05

How about that!…Andrea Pirlo is congratulated by Alessandro Nesta after putting Milan 3-0 up against Juventus

● 30/10/05

Crunch game…Celtic replace Hearts as leaders in Scotland after beating Dundee United 4-2 away

DIEGO MARADONA

The controversial Argentinian is enjoying a new lease of life as a television chat-show host

THE ARGENTINA icon had good reason to celebrate his 45th birthday. His TV chat show, *La Noche Del 10* (The night of the No 10), has achieved record ratings, and a new series is likely. The special guest on the last edition of the first series was Cuban leader Fidel Castro, with whom Maradona played head tennis at the end of the show.

Away from the studio, and when he wasn't appearing at demonstrations against US President George Bush, Maradona was contemplating an offer from Argentinian FA president Julio Grondona to join the national team coaching set-up. He eventually declined, saying he did not want to interfere with the work of head coach Jose Pekerman.

Eric Weil

'Maradona played head tennis with Fidel Castro'

On my head, son…Cuban leader Castro gets into the swing of things on the Maradona show

Numbers game

£245m…

the record sum paid by US broadcasters ABC/ESPN and Univision to secure the American TV rights for all FIFA events between 2007 and 2014.

£75m…

the cost to Australian building company Multiplex of overruns on the construction of the new Wembley stadium.

£15m…

the amount raised by Celtic from a new share issue to invest in their youth system and build a training complex.

1,352…

the number of minutes Argentinian goalkeeper Jose Maria Buljubasich went without conceding a goal for Chilean side Universidad Catolica.

106…

the number of goals scored for Juventus by David Trezeguet after his brace against Bayern Munich, taking him above John Charles in the club's all-time scorers' list.

52…

the number of unbeaten games for Egypt's Al Ahly after their victory over Etoile Sahel in the African Champions League Final.

35…

the number of companies that applied to join the auction for future media rights to the German Bundesliga.

● 01/11/05

Decisive moment…Dani scores the winner for Betis against Chelsea in the Champions League

● 01/11/05

Muscling in…Lyon grab a 4-1 victory away to Olympiakos

● 02/11/05

Three-sy does it…Samuel Eto'o celebrates his hat-trick in Barcelona's 5-0 win against Panathinaikos

HEADLINERS

HUGO SANCHEZ

The Mexico coach's biggest critic whose own results forced him to quit

HUGO SANCHEZ, the former Real Madrid and Mexico striker, has quit as manager of Pumas UNAM following a poor run of results which greatly undermined his claim to be the natural choice to lead the Mexican national team.

Pumas won both Mexican championships played last year (the 2003-04 closing and 2004-05 opening) and Sanchez had used the success to mount attack after attack on national coach Ricardo Lavolpe, demanding he should get the job himself in time for the 2006 World Cup.

Now it is Sanchez who finds himself without a job, while Lavolpe is sitting pretty, his position secure having steered Mexico convincingly into the Germany finals.

Pumas' results included a 5-0 home defeat by Cruz Azul and a 5-1 drubbing away to Jaguares. The scorelines raised wry smiles among non-Pumas fans because five was supposed to be Sanchez's lucky number (he was top scorer in Spain five times during his days with Real Madrid).

By the time Sanchez left, Pumas were lying meekly at the bottom of Group 2 in the 2005-06 opening championship with a paltry 13 points from 15 games and only three wins.

"By mutual agreement, we believe it's convenient to bring this stage of my relationship with the Pumas team to an end," said the 47-year-old, reading from a prepared statement. "I've learned a lot of things that have helped me mature as a person and a coach." However, he refused to take questions from the floor.

> **'We believe it's convenient to bring this stage of my relationship with the Pumas team to an end'**

The final straw came during a 2-1 home defeat by champions America as the Pumas fans, who had hero-worshipped Sanchez until a few weeks before, turned on him – even chanting "Lavolpe, Lavolpe", the ultimate insult.

Sanchez had a brief stint in charge of Pumas, his first coaching job, in 2000 before being sacked by then president Javier Jimenez Espriu because of personal differences. He was brought back the following year after changes to the board.

On the field, Pumas have never recovered from the departure of national team striker Francisco Fonseca to Cruz Azul at the end of last year. Off it, Sanchez was not on the best terms with president Elias Ayub nor with Argentinian striker Bruno Marioni, while his attacks on Lavolpe upset his own players, some of whom publicly distanced themselves from their coach's comments.

Less than 24 hours after his departure Sanchez suffered another blow, having held what he thought was a secret meeting with Jorge Vergara, the flamboyant owner of Guadalajara. Vergara, however, told all Mexico's leading papers about it and Sanchez was seen as trying to steal the job of Guadalajara's Spanish coach, Xavier Azkargorta.

Brian Homewood

Time to go…Sanchez went from hero to zero as Pumas' form nosedived

● 03/11/05

Political statement…Diego Maradona takes part in demonstrations against US President George Bush

● 05/11/05

Trophy in sight…Mohammed Noor (left) scores Al Ittihad's second goal in their 4-2 Asian Champions League Final second leg victory against Al Ain

JAVIER CLEMENTE

Back in business at Bilbao

TIME WAS WHEN Javier Clemente would fly to London on a Saturday and see his wife safely off to Harrods and the West End while he went to an Arsenal or Tottenham game. Those were the days when the dapper Basque was Spain's national coach, a role he held for seven years until the media grew tired of him.

That was then, this is now. Today, the wives of some national managers do not lower themselves to mix with the general populace around the shops; the fashion houses come to them. This is not the football world in which Clemente grew up. He has become increasingly ill at ease with players whose values depend not only on their talent on the pitch as "futbolistas" but also their impact off it as "mediaticos".

One magazine sneered: "You cannot turn the clock back." But that is what Clemente's beloved Athletic Bilbao have done in setting the 55-year-old possibly the greatest challenge of his career – saving a wonderfully anachronistic club, whom he led to the Spanish League title in 1983 and 1984, from relegation from the top flight for the first time.

'It's as if the team has a bad illness which we have to cure'

Clemente, who has worked as a media pundit since leaving Espanyol in 2003, established a reputation as a relegation fire-fighter after losing his job as Spain boss in autumn 1998. Sometimes, as with Betis and Real Sociedad, his methods have worked; sometimes, as with Marseille and Tenerife, they have not. But if he fails this time, Spanish, European and world football will be the poorer.

Clemente says: "It's a tough job to come back to, emotionally as well as technically, given my history with 'my' club [Clemente was also a player with Bilbao and had a second spell as coach in 1991]. I've told the players they are the best, but getting them to believe that and play up to it is something else.

"It's as if the team has a bad illness which we have to cure. Lifting the pressure is one thing. For example, the defenders are almost afraid to kick the ball because they get such a hard time from the media. Criticism is necessary sometimes but it has to be positive. That's the way forward."

Keir Radnedge

Challenge…Clemente must try to save his beloved club

GOOD MONTH FOR...

Mega deal…Blazer

Guus Hiddink…the Dutch coach succeeded where Terry Venables and others had failed before, as Australia beat Uruguay on penalties to qualify for the World Cup for only the second time.

Otto Rehhagel…the German signed up for another two years in charge of European champions Greece. "I had a number of other offers, but deep down my heart is in Greece."

Chuck Blazer…the CONCACAF general secretary was the driving force behind FIFA's £245m USA TV rights deal, the biggest TV agreement with a single country in FIFA's history.

Sven Goran Eriksson…after England's dramatic 3-2 friendly win over Argentina in Geneva, the dismal losers from Belfast were transformed into near-certain World Cup winners by a popular media with no sense of perspective.

BAD MONTH FOR...

Out in the cold…Worns

Christian Worns…the Borussia Dortmund defender was again left out of the Germany squad by coach Jurgen Klinsmann.

Dagfinn Enerly…the Fredrikstad and Norway international suffered a neck injury in the last League game of the season that may leave him paralysed from the neck down.

Eric Abidal…the Lyon defender broke a foot in France's friendly victory over Costa Rica in Martinique, a game held to raise funds for air crash victims from the island.

Age Hareide…the Norway coach not only saw his team lose 2-0 on aggregate to the Czech Republic in the World Cup play-offs but also was criticised for his comments following the 1-0 first leg defeat. "We were too much like ladies," Hareide said. "We tiptoed around on high heels."

● 06/11/05

Loss leaders…Chelsea suffer their first League defeat of the season at Manchester United

● 06/11/05

Not again!…injury-jinxed Jonathan Woodgate suffers a hamstring problem during Real Madrid's game with Zaragoza

● 08/11/05

G'day…veteran Japanese forward Kazuyoshi Miura joins Sydney FC ahead of their Club World Championship campaign

WS WORLD SOCCER Brian Glanville

…on Wenger's anger and the spat with Mourinho…Fleet Street's alarm at Rupert Lowe's libel award…and happy memories of Johnny Haynes

ALL THAT TWEEDLEDUM and Tweedledeeing between Arsene Wenger and Jose Mourinho tends to have obscured the bizarre diatribe launched by Wenger at the journalists who attended the press conference that followed Arsenal's home win against Sparta Prague in the Champions League. Having calmly dealt with the game itself, Wenger seemed incensed when a question was raised about his exchanges with Mourinho.

The *casus belli* appeared to be that he had been quoted as having called Mourinho stupid. He was, he said, tired of having words wrongly attributed to him, tired of journalists hiding behind headlines, claiming that they had not been written by themselves. One had never seen him so angry; if angry at all at any previous press conference. He might, he said, even take action, as against Mourinho.

Yet what was it all about? This is how he was quoted: "I just think that when you give success to stupid people, it makes them more stupid sometimes." Of whom, if it were not Mourinho, could he possibly have been talking? And, fully justified in resenting Mourinho's insulting, baseless use of the word voyeur, was Wenger not fully entitled to issue as mild a rebuke as "stupid"?

There are those closer to him than myself who believe he may well be obsessed with Chelsea and Mourinho. If so, I am sure he would not be alone among Premiership managers, and who could blame him or them?

Once again one has to say that Roman Abramovich's billions have completely distorted the realities of the Premiership. In that context, it was almost a relief to see Chelsea go down so ineptly in Seville to Betis, a team Chelsea beat in a canter at Stamford Bridge and who had previously gone down to Liverpool at home. And then Chelsea lost, however narrowly, at Old Trafford.

What seemed to have roused Mourinho to his hyperbole was Wenger's remarks, after Chelsea drew at Everton and lost in the League Cup on penalties to Charlton, that Chelsea might be running low on confidence. The defeat in Seville suggested that Wenger may well have had a point, but it was very much a question of twisting the lion's tail. It doesn't take much to provoke an outburst from Mourinho.

Downer…Wenger suggested Chelsea's confidence had dropped after defeat by Charlton

'Was Wenger, fully justified in resenting Mourinho's insulting use of the word voyeur, not entitled to issue as mild a rebuke as "stupid"?'

WHETHER Wenger will make good his threat to sue Mourinho is not known at the time I'm writing. But should he do so, no doubt he would be happy to have the support of the kind of jury that recently awarded £250,000 to Rupert Lowe, the chairman of Southampton. They decided that this was merited by the libel against him by *The Times*, which had called his treatment

● 08/11/05

At the helm…former Portsmouth and Oxford boss Graham Rix is appointed first-team coach at Hearts

● 09/11/05

Happy return…Nicolas Anelka, back in the France team after three years, scores during the 3-2 come-from-behind win against Costa Rica

of his former manager David Jones "shabby".

Significantly, the size of the award was promptly reduced to £50,000 pending appeal; the verdict could not be overturned. But there was predictable alarm and surprise in Fleet Street when the initial award was made. The jury clearly had no truck with the old criterion of "fair comment on a matter of public interest". It may be remembered that Jones, a decent man with an impeccable record, was viciously accused by boys he had supervised in a Liverpool home of abusing them. While the case dragged on, months on end passing before it came to court, Southampton and Lowe decided that the wisest course was to sideline Jones (not dismiss him).

What made you wonder about the jury's verdict was the massive size of the award. Lowe might well have been libelled, as they decided, but such damages were punitive and, as the court of appeal seemingly decided, seemed quite out of proportion to the offence. It was hard to resist the impression that those jury members had a hatred of the press. Nothing new.

MANY memories of Johnny Haynes, so sadly killed in a car crash in October. Not least of his push-me-pull-you relations with his Fulham team-mate Tosh Chamberlain, as erratic and unpredictable as Haynes was precise. There was one game at Craven

Immaculate passes…Haynes

Cottage when Haynes found Chamberlain with one of his immaculate passes, only for the left-winger to boot the ball high and wide. In the memorable words of that fine football journalist Bob Ferrier, there was "much hands on hipping from Haynes".

"Ain't he a ****ing big 'ead," shouted Chamberlain. At which referee Mervyn Griffiths came running up to him and barked: "What did you say? What's your name?"

"Don't be a ****** ref!" answered Chamberlain. "He's on our side!"

Then there was the friendly against Sampdoria in Genoa when Fulham were given a free-kick on the edge of the box. "Chip it, Tosh!" ordered Haynes. Chamberlain ran up to the ball and hit it so hard that, in the words of another Fulham player, "if it hadn't been for the net, the ball would have ended in the Mediterranean!" As the players trotted back for the kick-off, Haynes said: "I thought I told you to chip it, Tosh!"

"I did!" said Chamberlain.

Haynes played for England in two World Cups and didn't really do himself justice in either of them. In 1958 in Sweden he was suffering from blistered feet and weary from a hard and unsuccessful promotion battle with Fulham. In 1962 in Chile he was a somewhat truculent captain of a disappointing England team.

Sadly, only months later, in Blackpool to play for Fulham, he was involved in a car crash, smashing up his knee. He would ultimately recover to play for Fulham but never again for England.

'At the 1962 World Cup, Haynes was a somewhat truculent captain of a disappointing England team'

Notes & quotes

"I'm hurt and sad. I think the boss wanted to send me a signal."

Betis winger Joaquin responds to his surprise exclusion from Spain's squad for the World Cup play-offs.

"The standard of some Italian stadia would not be good enough for the German Second Division."

Ex-Roma favourite Rudi Voller predicts Italy has some work to do in order to win the Euro 2012 hosting rights.

"My feeling at the moment is that it will be very, very hard to be on the bench again for another big tournament."

Arsenal keeper Jens Lehmann threatens to pull out of the Germany squad if not first choice for the World Cup.

In – or out…Lehmann

"I grew up there. When someone says we have to clean up the suburbs with a vacuum, he doesn't know what he's talking about."

France defender Lilian Thuram gives his response to his country's Interior Minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, who had advocated uncompromising measures to combat rioting in France's inner cities.

"We need more Dutch players. They understand the mentality of our football better than foreigners."

New Ajax technical director Martin Van Geel signposts a change in direction at the stuttering club.

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'Juve not won it yet!'

PM and Milan owner Berlusconi delighted in his club's defeat of the leaders

PADDY AGNEW in Rome

AT ONE O'CLOCK in the morning, two and a half hours after Milan had beaten leaders Juventus 3-1 at home in the season's first Big Two clash, a small group of journalists and some TV crews were still hanging around in the press room.

The reason the media posse was in no hurry to get home was that the Great Communicator himself, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, owner of Milan, was still on the premises. Berlusconi was enjoying an after-match chat and glass of wine with Milan's managing director Adriano Galliani, coach Carlo Ancelotti, Juventus director Antonio Giraudo and visiting coach Fabio Capello.

There is arguably nothing the controversial Berlusconi has enjoyed more over the years than Milan's success, something that owes much to his financial resources, his energy, enthusiasm, new ideas and not inconsiderable knowledge of football.

Never a man to hide his light under a bushel, Berlusconi often portrays himself as not only Milan's inspirational guiding light but also its very soul. When it comes to election time (and we are due for a general election in Italy next April), he is never shy about associating himself with the winning Milan image.

An emphatic win over arch-rivals Juventus – Milan had taken a 3-0 half-time lead, with the visitors' goal only a late consolation – was too good an opportunity to miss.

"It was a great night, and in a sense even Juventus ought to be happy because we've thrown the championship contest wide open again," Berlusconi said. "Above all, though, we've wiped out the Istanbul syndrome. Mind you, I'd like to point out that on that May 25 night, I refused to accept congratulations from people at half-time. Deep down inside, I felt something was wrong. Even after we went 3-0 up tonight with Pirlo's goal, Fedele Confalonieri [head of his Mediaset TV empire] was telling me not to start celebrating.

Keep your nose out of it…Juve's Adrian Mutu feels the heat from an angry Milan trio of Alessandro Nesta, Jaap Stam and goalkeeper Dida

"The team deserves nine out of 10 for its attitude and its will to win, and it gets eight out of 10 for its tactical disposition. You all know, of course, that I know what I'm talking about. Some years ago, I coached an amateur youth team and led them to victory. Whether you're sitting at a meeting of the G8 or on the coach's bench, it helps to be intelligent."

Two-horse race

Whatever the merits of the rest of the Prime Minister's comments, he was right about one thing: the effect of Milan's win on the Serie A title contest. Juventus had won their first nine games, a record, and were threatening to run away with the championship, but the loss at San Siro brought Milan to within two points of the top.

However, the race could only be termed "wide open" in the sense that it is a two-horse contest that is too tough to call at present. Although surprise package Fiorentina were just three points further back in third after 11 rounds, they look to have serious shortcomings since the squad is relatively young, inexperienced and lacks depth. A disappointing Internazionale were a further five points adrift.

Back to the main event, and the key to Milan's success – their adoption of a hard-tackling, hard-chasing style which outplayed Juventus at their own game. The battle was won in midfield, where Gennaro Gattuso and Andrea Pirlo eclipsed Juve's Emerson and Patrick Vieira. That said, Milan took the lead rather fortuitously, Clarence Seedorf's 14th-minute shot from the edge of the area taking a deflection off the boot of Juve defender Lilian Thuram and looping over goalkeeper Antonio Chimenti, in for the injured Christian Abbiati.

Twelve minutes later, Juventus failed to clear a Pirlo free-kick from out on the right, Kaka pounced and it was 2-0. Just before half-time, Milan wrapped up the proceedings when Chimenti made a complete mess of a less-than-testing Pirlo free-kick.

At that stage, the Old Lady could only hope for another attack of the Istanbul jitters. But it was not to be and at no stage in the second half did they look capable of getting back into the game, even after David Trezeguet scored in the 76th minute.

The final scoreline was perhaps a little flattering to Milan, and it came as no surprise to hear Capello telling journalists that he was "very, very satisfied" with his side – implying Milan had had more than their fair share of luck.

After a stuttering start to the season, marked by an opening day draw with Ascoli and a 2-1 defeat by Sampdoria in the third round, Milan have finally settled into their stride. They have also been boosted by the return to action of Filippo Inzaghi from injury. The 32-year-old striker scored his first Serie A goal – a diving header in the 2-1 win over Palermo – since March 2004. But, in truth, the real Inzaghi has been missing since the day in September 2003 he injured an ankle in a clash with Perugia goalkeeper Zeljko Kalac.

Adriano aggravation

Milan's cross-town rivals, Inter, have had no good news as they continue to flounder in their custom-built Bermuda Triangle of dressing-room tensions, management indulgence and lack of team spirit. One of the bones of contention, yet again, is the behaviour of striker Adriano. In mid-October, he incurred the wrath of team-mate Juan Veron when he arrived back late from Brazil's World Cup games. In late October, he made himself even less popular in the dressing-room when he turned up late for training.

The club quickly issued a communique assuring everyone that Adriano had had permission to miss training in order to sort out urgent personal matters in the city centre. In reality, he had been out on the town the night before, as confirmed by many sightings of him at two of Milan's hottest nightclubs.

Worse still for Inter was that this latest "misunderstanding" with Adriano coincided with the club's worst set of results so far this season – a 3-2 home defeat by Roma, a 2-2 draw at Sampdoria and a 0-0 draw at Lazio, while the disclosure in early November that the club had returned an £80million operating loss for the 2004-05 season did not help matters either.

Perplexed owner Massimo Moratti could only tell fellow club shareholders: "Obviously, I'm not happy with the way the season is going. After we won the Italian Cup last June, I was sure we were on an upward curve and that optimism increased after we qualified for the Champions League then beat Juventus in the Supercup. Maybe the players took it too easy after that, or maybe there was too much stress."

Nedo Sonetti has become lowly Cagliari's fourth coach of the season, replacing Davide Ballardini following a 0-0 home draw with fellow strugglers Treviso on November 6. The Sardinians had already got through Attilio Tesser and Daniele Arrigoni.

Clearly the result satisfied neither club, since Treviso boss Ezio Rossi also got the sack. His replacement is former Lecce and Fiorentina boss Alberto Cavasin.

Lecce, bottom after 11 games, are the only other club to have switched coach, firing Angelo Gregucci after taking only one point from the first five matches. Silvio Baldini is the new man in charge.

Italy revivalist…Ferruccio Valcareggi

Italian football has been paying its respects to former national team coach Ferruccio Valcareggi, who died on November 2 at the age of 86. Appointed in the wake of Italy's humiliating 1966 World Cup elimination by North Korea, Valcareggi worked alongside Helenio Herrera for a year before assuming total control. He led Italy to the 1968 European Championship title on home soil and to the World Cup Final two years later, when they were beaten by Brazil. Valcareggi was in charge for 52 games, winning 27 and losing only six. Born in Trieste on February 12, 1919, he played as a wing-half for Fiorentina, whom he later coached.

'Even Juventus ought to be happy because we've thrown the championship wide open'

Silvio Berlusconi finds some bizarre consolation for Milan's defeated opponents

Body count

Recent football-related violence caused four deaths and numerous injuries but the authorities have been powerless to act

BRIAN HOMEWOOD in Rio de Janeiro

THREE PEOPLE DIED in less than 24 hours in another bout of football-related violence in Brazil. Two were shot in fights between Palmeiras and Corinthians fans, while the other fatality was a Ponte Preta fan, beaten to death by Sao Paulo supporters. Another fan died after Flamengo's match with Botafogo and there was a riot at the Vasco da Gama-Flamengo derby in Rio de Janeiro during a grim month when, ironically, Brazilians rejected a government proposal to ban the sale of guns to the public in a referendum.

These days, Palmeiras-Corinthians matches are almost a guarantee of trouble, but this time the incidents were uglier than usual. The first death happened as rival fans on their way to the game – at Palmeiras – crossed paths and clashed at Sao Paulo's Tatuape metro station. Police said around 50 Palmeiras fans and 100 Corinthians supporters attacked each other with sticks and stones. Shots were fired and one of them hit 23-year-old Diogo Lima Borges, who was taken to hospital but died on the operating table. After the match, which ended 1-1, 25-year-old Corinthians fan Wellington Moraes was shot in the head and killed during another clash in the south of the city.

The following morning, 26-year-old Anderson Tomas, a Ponte Preta supporter, was attacked by a group of Sao Paulo fans as he waited to collect a ticket outside his team's stadium in Campinas for a game between the two sides two days later. Witnesses said Tomas was left bleeding on the pavement after a group of 10 to 15 fans beat him with sticks and iron bars.

The three deaths brought a brief period of indignity but, as usual, no real action. The football authorities dismissed the violence as a social problem, while the police's hands appeared to be tied by the intricacies of the Brazilian justice system, which many feel is heavily weighted in favour of the criminals. Where else, for example, do suspected drink-drivers escape a breathalyser test because the constitution says that "citizens do not have to provide evidence that could incriminate themselves".

Holding back the tide…riot police keep Flamengo fans at bay as violence flares on the terraces during the derby with Vasco da Gama

Police were unable to detain anyone because all three incidents happened one week before the gun referendum, and Brazilian electoral law stipulates that nobody can be arrested for any crime in the seven days before a vote unless they are caught red-handed. Rodrigo de Azevedo Lopes Fonseca was identified as having fired the shot that killed Borges at the metro station, but although he was hauled in for questioning, police decided not to apply for permission to hold him in custody "because he has a fixed abode and is co-operating with investigations".

Incidentally, Brazil's culture of impunity was largely blamed on the result of the referendum, many people feeling only law-abiding citizens would be affected by the ban as the crooks can still get their hands on as many smuggled weapons as they want.

Truncheons and pepper spray

Not surprisingly, in the circumstances, the violence continued and at least 15 people were injured during disturbances before, during and after the Vasco-Flamengo derby. There were clashes outside the ground before kick-off which were broken up by police using truncheons and pepper spray. The Flamengo team coach was surrounded by Vasco thugs, who were forced away by police, and rival fans then spent most of the game hurling fireworks at each other.

This is another fixture where trouble is virtually guaranteed – in fact, any Flamengo game can be considered high-risk. Even when there are no opposing fans to clash with, the various factions of the Flamengo support often fight among themselves. Two weeks after the Vasco game, Flamengo supporters clashed with those of Botafogo on the highway that connects Volta Redonda – where their teams had just played their derby due to the closure of the Maracana for refurbishment – and Rio de Janeiro. A bus carrying Botafogo fans broke down, Flamengo supporters attacked and 20-year-old Rafik Tavares was knifed to death while another fan was seriously injured.

The violence followed the match-fixing scandal which has already tarnished the championship. This centred on referee Edilson Pereira de Carvalho, who has admitted that he took money from a group of gamblers to try to swing the results of some matches. Although Carvalho did not try to fiddle every game he refereed, Brazil's sporting tribunal voided all 11 championship matches he officiated.

All have now been replayed and only two finished with the same result second time around – Ponte Preta beating Sao Paulo again and Internacional repeating their win over Coritiba. Corinthians were seen as the big beneficiaries as they drew with Sao Paulo and beat defending champions Santos second time around, both away from home, having lost both games when refereed by Carvalho.

Those additional points helped Corinthians – in the first season following the signing of their controversial sponsorship deal with the shadowy London-based group Media Sports Investments – into a six-point lead in the championship table with five matches to play.

Corinthians' good showing has come despite off-field chaos. They are now on to their fourth coach in eight months and there have been allegations of an attempt by club president Alberto Dualib to persuade MSI's backers to replace Kia Joorabchian as the investment group's president.

Antonio Lopes, former police detective and victim of several failed hair transplants, is Corinthians' latest coach. He replaced Marcio Bittencourt, who many felt was doing a good job but was considered "too inexperienced" for the post. Lopes, meanwhile, unceremoniously ditched Atletico Paranaense after receiving the Corinthians offer.

It is this sort of behaviour that has led most neutrals to back Internacional and Fluminense, the closest challengers to Corinthians in the title race. Both have kept up their challenge without the help of big bucks or replayed matches and have kept faith with the same coaches throughout the tournament – Muricy Ramalho at Internacional and Abel Braga at Fluminense.

Terrific Tevez

In fairness, Corinthians have played some superb football and their Argentinian forward Carlos Tevez – MSI's first signing, from Boca Juniors for £11million – has been outstanding. His best display came at home against Santos, setting up the first goal for Rosinei after 42 seconds and then scoring a 36-minute hat-trick as Corinthians romped to a 7-1 win against the deflated defending champions.

Predictably, Santos have failed to overcome the departure of Robinho to Real Madrid, though that is far from being the only reason behind the slump. Like Corinthians, they have employed four coaches this season and, as with the leaders, the most recent change – Nelsinho Baptista for Gallo – left a bad taste as Santos negotiated with Nelsinho behind Gallo's back. Nelsinho, who had spent the previous two years in Japan with Nagoya Grampus Eight, negotiated terms during a stopover at Los Angeles airport on the flight back from Tokyo. Gallo was then called into the office of Santos director Luis Menezes and told the news.

Relegation-threatened Paysandu have called in Brazil's fiery 1970 World Cup captain Carlos Alberto Torres to try to save them after parting company with Gilson Kleina. "I'm experienced and I know how to motivate a team," said Torres, who was most recently in charge of Azerbaijan. "Football's a simple game, it's us [coaches] who make it complicated."

No fond farewell…Junior Baiano

Struggling Flamengo seem to have found the answer to all their problems. They have sacked central defender Junior Baiano, ever-present for Brazil at the 1998 World Cup but who was kicked out of Werder Bremen after punching an opponent off the ball and getting himself suspended for 10 matches. Baiano, sent off three times this year, was given his marching orders after scoring his second own goal of the Brazilian championship by chesting the ball nonchalantly past his own keeper in the 2-1 derby defeat by Vasco da Gama. His first effort earlier in the competition was even more spectacular as he lobbed the ball in. As soon as he had gone, Flamengo took 10 points out of a possible 12 to climb out of the relegation zone.

'These days, games between Palmeiras and Corinthians are almost a guarantee of trouble'

Pic: Popperfoto

Dream team heyday…Peru goalkeeper Luis Rubinos thwarts Brazil during the 1970 World Cup quarter-final but the national team have been short on success in recent years

Confidence crisis

The domestic game's decline is hampering Peru's efforts to get back among the world's elite

TIM VICKERY in Lima

WHEN PERU BURST on the scene in the 1970 World Cup, reaching the quarter-finals, they took the eye with the beauty of their shirts and the quality of their play. As Jeff Dawson recalls in *Back Home,* his book on the tournament, former England manager Walter Winterbottom, whose side had been destroyed by Hungary in the 1950s, called Peru "the new Magyars". Most settled on "the new Brazil". All predicted a glorious future.

Five years later Peru won the Copa America. But their success soon petered out. They had some good moments at the 1978 World Cup, fewer in 1982 and have not qualified since. Their golden era was limited to the span of a single generation. Its most prominent member, Teofilo Cubillas, looks on sadly as Peru prepare to sit out the World Cup for the sixth consecutive time. It grieves Cubillas, the scorer of 10 of Peru's 18 finals goals, that his successors finished the 2006 qualifiers ninth out of the 10 South American countries.

What has gone wrong with Peruvian football? Cubillas lets out a long sigh and says: "This is a very wide topic." So wide it reaches into every corner of Peruvian society. Making connections between a country's political climate and the state of its football is crude and dangerous. But certainly the period of Cubillas and co coincided with one of the most fascinating moments in their country's history.

Peru, the heart of Spanish South America, was deeply marked by the old colonial model of exporting raw materials and importing manufactured products. It left the majority of the people poor and marginalised. In 1968 an attempt was made to change things – from a most unlikely source. The army took power. But unlike the usual South American gang of thugs, General Juan Velasco's military government was of the left, committed to a revolutionary overhaul of society. Big farms were broken up and the land distributed to the peasants, priority was given to local industry, and many organisations were set up to include the rural and urban poor in the decision-making process.

It all ran out of steam fairly quickly. The bureaucratic structures

proved unwieldy, and economic problems forced a retreat in 1975, after which the army were looking for a way out. By 1980 the same old politicians were back in power.

But the period left its mark on Peruvian football, not least through its emphasis on education. "We used to have five or six players for every position because there were good coaches working in the state schools," Cubillas says. "That's how I and many others came through. Since they sacked the coaches the talent has dried up."

The heady years of the Velasco regime, when unlimited progress seemed possible, gave a huge boost to national self-esteem. That was punctured as harsh reality hit home once more. Part of the appeal of 1990s president Alberto Fujimori was his Japanese roots – his electoral strength was an admission of the lack of faith in Peruvian solutions for Peruvian problems, a sentiment that has extended to the football field.

Players' insecurity

Juan Carlos Oblitas was a team-mate of Cubillas in the golden era, and the national side's most successful coach since – his team missed out on a place at France 98 only on goal difference. "In my day as a player we were more sure of ourselves," Oblitas says. "Over the past few years the players have felt a terrible insecurity. Ninety per cent of them grew up without a father. I've been criticised for being a paternalist coach, but if you don't adopt a paternalist approach, it's a disaster."

Oblitas identifies another reason why the players' confidence has been undermined. "We've stopped qualifying for World Cups since the *chicha* newspapers appeared," he says, referring to a type of tabloid newspaper, found rarely elsewhere in South America, that specialises in hysterical stories about footballers' misbehaviour. Standards of professionalism could indeed be higher, as in many other countries. But in Peru the press will happily make a major scandal out of a player enjoying a quiet beer on his day off. The concept of *ampay* – a player caught with a glass in his hand or a woman in tow – is crucial to an understanding of contemporary Peruvian football. As Oblitas says: "This type of paper foments a culture of negativity."

Former national team striker Flavio Maestri makes it clear how much this seeps into the dressing-room. "We've had problems winning at home because when you play you can feel this adverse atmosphere on top of you," he says. "There are players who prefer not to be called up because they're afraid of the climate they're going to face, with the public ready to jeer them if things go wrong."

This fear of the crowd was never more apparent than when Peru hosted Uruguay in June. They badly needed a win to keep them in with a chance of going to Germany, but drew 0-0 after 90 frantic minutes in which they produced none of the joyful passing, changes of rhythm or individual flair that had caught the world's imagination 35 years earlier. The team had blown their World Cup chances, had played no football of note, but they left the pitch happy with their performance. They had run, they had fought and they had shown their public they were not just a collection of drunks and bums.

'Players prefer not to be called up in case they get jeered if things go wrong'

Former national team striker Flavio Maestri

The Peruvian game has declined both relatively – it has been overtaken by that of Ecuador and Colombia – and in absolute terms. For example, there is a consensus that youth development work has fallen back badly.

Miguel Company, another former national team coach, says: "We used to have school tournaments and inter-neighbourhood competitions, and all the clubs had youth sides, which used to play the preliminary matches before the first-team game. All of this gave young players an excellent grounding." Cubillas outlines the reality now, saying: "There's no long-term planning any more. Everything is done for today."

This inevitably filters through to senior level, where the quality of players has fallen. "My generation were mentally stronger than the players of today," Cubillas asserts, "and we were also physically stronger. When I watch the Peruvian championship I notice that the rhythm of the game is so slow. While our domestic game doesn't improve it's going to be very hard for us to compete internationally."

Domestic football has been moving alarmingly in the wrong direction. Between 1998 and 2003 crowds fell by 22 per cent, income by 54 per cent, and almost all the clubs have big financial problems. The Peruvian game also suffers from the fact that so much of it is centred in Lima. Cienciano from Cuzco have had some recent success, but the big, traditional clubs are all clustered in the giant capital. The provinces are massively under-represented.

Peru staged last year's Copa America and the recent World Under-17 Championship and investments were made in stadiums in Arequipa and Tacna in the south, Trujillo, Chiclayo and Piura in the north, Cuzco in the mountains and Iquitos in the jungle.

Now it is up to the administrators to follow through. Switching the base of the national team to the extreme altitude of Cuzco is unlikely to help, as Nolberto Solano pointed out when the idea was recently floated. The Newcastle midfielder, perhaps his country's finest player over the past decade, argued that unlike altitude specialists Bolivia and Ecuador, the majority of Peruvians are lowlanders and would therefore be unlikely to gain any advantage from the move.

Besides, Solano believes there are far more pressing issues to address, saying: "Before thinking about playing in Cuzco, the directors should stop fighting among themselves and help the team prepare for the next Copa America and World Cup qualifiers by organising a decentralised national championship."

It would be a step on the long road towards coming good on the promise that Peru revealed in such fine style in 1970.

Flagged up…Peruvian fans during the Under-17s

This year's World Under-17 Championship was a hit with the Peruvian public, especially in the provinces. But staging a 32-team World Cup, which seemingly requires a minimum of 10 cities, seems to be well beyond the country's reach, as with most of the other South American nations. It would be too much for Argentina, which organised a 16-team tournament in 1978, the last time the competition came to town, and while Colombia has enough cities and some good stadiums, political problems would appear to rule it out for the moment. Unless joint bids are allowed, Brazil is currently the continent's only candidate.

Cheers to Osasuna

The unheralded Basque side went top of La Liga having put their faith in youth players and squad rotation

SID LOWE in Madrid

ELEVEN MATCHES into La Liga, and while the media went to town over the imminent Real Madrid-Barcelona *clasico*, a rather smaller and less fashionable club slipped almost unnoticed into top spot. Pamplona-based Atletico Osasuna have made the best start in their 86-year history, climbing two points above Barcelona and three ahead of Madrid – pretty good going for a club who have never won anything, have a budget one-fifteenth the size of Barca's, at £11.2m against £170m, and who did not spend a single euro on signings this summer, compared to the £65m splashed out by Real Madrid.

Osasuna is the Basque word for good health and accompanies a raised glass. Never before has the name been more appropriate. The team were expected to struggle against relegation this season, especially in the wake of the departure of midfield linchpin Pablo Garcia to Real Madrid – instead, they are flying. Atletico Cheers, indeed. The headline in the Pamplona-based daily *Diario de Navarra* said it all: "What joy!"

It is no fluke, either, or the happy consequence of an easy start. Osasuna have fully deserved their lead. At the time of writing, they had been top for three rounds, having defeated Celta Vigo, Villarreal, Sevilla and Deportivo La Coruna (fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh respectively). They also won away at Basque rivals Real Sociedad for the first time and received a ringing endorsement from Sociedad coach Jose Maria Amorrortu, who said they were "easily the best side to play here this season".

Osasuna may not be brimming with brilliance – indeed, the players privately admit that they're not playing especially well – but they have real pace, aggression, organisation and determination. The side that conceded more goals than any other in the top flight last season have tightened up and grown tougher, roared along by

their home support. The crowd at El Sadar is unquestionably among Spain's very best – it's no coincidence that Osasuna won all their first six home League games.

"We're not phenomenons," said Serb striker Savo Milosevic, "but we are gladiators." His judgement is sound. Osasuna are physically imposing, fresh, fast and fit, aided by coach Javier Aguirre's rotation policy and an injection of youth keen to take on the world.

Entry of the gladiators…Savo Milosevic knows what makes surprise leaders Osasuna tick

Intense work ethic

Osasuna have not fielded the same team twice, only one player has played over 800 of the 990 maximum minutes, only three over 700, and on average Aguirre makes almost six changes to his team every match. Even the goalkeepers have been switched over, and by the time the season was six matches old, Aguirre had used every single member of his squad. "There are no stars in our side; no one feels like a starter or a sub," says defender Cesar Cruchaga.

As well as showing the knack of being able to rotate his squad and still win consistently, Aguirre has also instilled an intense work ethic which contrasts with his easy-going, quick-witted off-field persona. He responded to his players' claims that they would enjoy their trip to Camp Nou in October by insisting: "The bastards are mad; they can go to the pub if they want to enjoy themselves. Out on the pitch they're not going to enjoy themselves at all." Indeed. Having held Barcelona at bay in the first half, Osasuna stumbled to a 3-0 defeat.

Another success for Aguirre stems from his decision, two years ago, to change the normal routine at the club's Tajonar base so that the youth team trained at the same time as the first team. That way, he reasoned, he would be able to keep a closer eye on the home-grown talents at his disposal.

The plan has worked a treat. While Aguirre could hardly fail to notice Raul Garcia, the creative midfielder that former coach Miguel-Angel Lotina named simply "Zidane", another 10 players have successfully made the step up between the two squads. What's more, 13 of the senior squad are from the local Navarra province. This is a club with a real sense of community and identity.

Forced by economic reality to rely on their youth set-up, Osasuna have set up agreements with 94 clubs in Navarra – which has a population of just 500,000 – and the links are not just producing results at senior level. Osasuna's B team are top of Second Division B, and two of the youth teams are leading their respective leagues.

The kids who pack Osasuna's 17 teams know that they have a real chance of making it to the first team because the coach is so aware of the youth set-up. But it's not just Osasuna's first team that beckons. Athletic Bilbao's Pablo Orbaiz, Tiko and Jesus Lacruz started at Osasuna, as did Santi Ezquerro, now at Barcelona. All of which helps to illustrate another key part of Osasuna's success this year: a new wave of very young players is coming through together and Osasuna are yet to sell them on. Indeed, hanging on this time may prove rather easier, with the £4m sale of Garcia to Madrid easing the financial pressure.

Garcia, formerly an outspoken critic of Real Madrid, admitted that he simply couldn't pass up the chance to join such a huge club, one with a real chance to lead the League and challenge for the Champions League. The "unlike Osasuna" went without saying. How things change.

Anti-racist stand…Samuel Eto'o

Last season, Barcelona forward Samuel Eto'o responded to monkey chants from home fans at Getafe by scoring the winner and jumping up and down with his hands under his armpits, later explaining: "If they're going to treat me like a monkey, I'm going to dance like one." This term, he was once again subjected to racist abuse at the same stadium. The Getafe board responded by making a PA announcement condemning the chants and displaying an anti-racism message on the scoreboard, but the club were still fined. As for Eto'o, he was nonplussed when overhearing a comment from Getafe keeper Luis Garcia after the game that racism was "nothing much, the kind of thing that happens everywhere". Eto'o's response said it all: "Thanks a lot, brother."

Bilbao dilemma

But it's not all good news for the Basque region's clubs. Athletic Bilbao are bottom having suffered their worst start to a season, prompting calls for the abandonment of their Basque-only player policy.

According to daily paper *AS*, when the Spanish League was founded in 1928, 56 per cent of its players were Basque. By the start of the civil war seven seasons later, Athletic had won four League titles. But the nationwide growth of football slowly diminished the region's importance, and since the Bosman ruling Basques account for just eight per cent of La Liga players.

Some insist that the club simply cannot limit themselves to so small a pool – even though Osasuna, with 13 players who would be eligible for Athletic, have shown Basque football is no barren desert.

Others have defended the policy, insisting, not unjustly, that the foreign transfer market is no guarantee either for a club whose budget ranks as Europe's 80th biggest. Besides, they add, relegation might be a high price, but is worth paying for a very special, unique identity.

New coach Javier Clemente, who has taken over from Jose Luis Mendilibar to become Athletic manager for the third time, takes the traditionalist view. "I'd take the Second Division before foreign players," he insists, adding: "Hopefully, it won't come to that."

The early signs are positive. Clemente, who managed Athletic to two League titles in the early 1980s, has sparked a reaction, will bring discipline and order to the side, and certainly has the San Mames faithful behind him – 4,000 turned up just to see his first training session in charge. There may be a surprise new face at the top of the table, but Spanish football has welcomed back an old favourite at the bottom.

'Enjoy themselves? The bastards are mad. They're not going to enjoy it at all'

Osasuna coach Javier Aguirre has no doubt what awaits his men in Barcelona

Forward and back

MLS continues to make progress off the pitch but produced another poor championship Final

PAUL GARDNER in New York

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER has much to feel good about at the end of its 10th season. During the League's board of governors meeting, it was confirmed that Toronto would be added as an expansion team in 2007, bringing membership up to 13 clubs, and that applications for a 14th team were being considered from several cities, including Philadelphia, Tulsa, Atlanta, Milwaukee, Houston and Cleveland. MLS has made it clear that one of the most important requirements for an expansion city will be the existence of, or plans to build, a soccer-specific stadium.

There was also highly promising news on the television front, including a return for MLS to Univision, a national Spanish-language network. A clause in the deal that ABC/ESPN recently signed to acquire future World Cup rights stipulates that the network must help promote the domestic game. This is expected to lead to improvements in the League's existing contract.

MLS clubs will also be encouraged to run youth academies. This has presented something of a problem in the past because the League, under its single-entity structure, owns the rights to all players; home-grown players have been put into the draft along with all the others, meaning that clubs have lost control over youngsters they had developed. MLS now says it will keep the youngsters out of the draft and allow clubs to retain control of them, a move that should overcome the clubs' reluctance to invest in youth programmes.

The single-entity structure, with its severe limit on team budgets for player salaries, has also been at the centre of another problem: the signing of big-name players. A change is evidently coming. "It's going to be an important new change to how we think about things and how we go forward into the future," said commissioner Don Garber, without offering any details. A relaxation of the maximum salary for any individual player – at the moment

LA time…Galaxy players and staff celebrate their MLS Cup victory

it stands at £160,000 per year – seems the most likely way of attracting top players.

When the governors had finished their upbeat meeting they trotted along to another positive scene – Pizza Hut Park, a sparkling new soccer-specific stadium in Frisco, 22 miles north of Dallas. There, they joined a standing-room-only crowd of 21,193 to watch New England Revolution and Los Angeles Galaxy battle it out for the MLS Cup in the championship-deciding game.

At that point the good news hit the buffers. The game was appalling. This was MLS's major publicity date of the year, the grand final on national television. And it presented football at its worst, a tedious 0-0 draw during which there were 51 fouls and 10 yellow cards. By the time the lone goal arrived – scored by Galaxy's Guillermo Ramirez at the end of the first extra-time period – fans were already leaving the scene of the crime.

The abysmal quality of the football added a strong element of urgency to whatever attempts MLS may be making to upgrade its players. The game's grimness was not entirely unexpected. The same teams had met in the 2002 MLS Cup game and also drew 0-0, with Galaxy again winning with a single goal in extra-time. Steve Nicol, the ex-Liverpool Scot, was Revolution's coach on both occasions, and in both games his team offered a Brit-style game of hard running, hard tackling, and not much else.

Slice of Pizza…Laporta at the MLS Cup

Barcelona president Joan Laporta turned up at Pizza Hut Park to watch MLS Cup 2005 and confirmed that his club were definitely interested in MLS. "Our interest is in starting an FC Barcelona team or obtaining a franchise in MLS," he said. "We are only thinking about the possibility, but I love the States…We are looking into the way soccer is organised here because we can maybe share a franchise."

Laporta also said he was impressed with Pizza Hut Park – "I appreciate it because it's a commercial stadium, and you can exploit the facilities." Unbelievably, he then added that he was also pleased with the quality of play in the Final.

British coaching failures

That was one thing that was not on the agenda at the board meeting. What to do about negative coaching. If there is one thing MLS should have learned in its 10 years, it is that British coaches are not a howling success in the League. Nicol has gone for broke with a Brit style – even to the point of hiring former England international Paul Mariner as his assistant. The team they have produced recorded the second best record in the League during the regular season, but as the pressure of play-off games mounted, their play got progressively grimmer and more physical.

Speaking with a group of fans before the Final, Garber stated forcefully that "most importantly, and I really mean most importantly, we need to break through to all those people in this country who don't believe in the sport of soccer…we truly need to achieve the elimination of all the soccer-bashing by influential people that still exists in this country."

Great ambitions immediately undermined by a nationally-televised game that emphasised the very things the soccer-bashers always pounce on: no goals and a scrappy, aimless midfield battle of attrition.

In a way, the awful Final was an appropriate end to what has been the least exciting of the League's 10 seasons. A season without a dominant team, without any outstanding players…a season that ended with the championship being won by a team that had just squeaked into the play-offs as the fourth-placed team in the western conference.

MLS says it will study its play-off system, which certainly did not work well this season. The bigger criticism of the system, that it reduces the importance of the regular season games, is also being considered. A possible answer, says Garber, would be the paying of win bonuses.

But even as MLS talks of expansion, it has problems to solve with two of its existing clubs. Both San Jose Earthquakes – the most successful team during the regular season – and Kansas City Wizards are looking for new ownership. Rumours persist that the Earthquake franchise (currently owned by the AEG group, which also owns MetroStars, Galaxy and Chicago Fire) will be bought by the Mexicans of Club America and moved, probably to Houston. MLS has been looking for local ownership groups for San Jose and Kansas City (currently owned by Lamar Hunt, who also owns the Columbus and Dallas clubs), but he admits that the fan base in Kansas City "hasn't been as strong as we had hoped".

The keys to MLS success, says Garber, are local ownership, a soccer-specific stadium and a committed fan base. That is a list that makes strange reading for a League in which only five of its 12 clubs currently have local ownership.

The ownership situation was both enlivened and complicated by the sudden arrival of Barcelona on the scene (see panel). Whatever can be said for or against the Spanish club joining the MLS group of owners, such a move would definitely not come under the heading of local ownership. But MLS has already gone down this route, with the formation this season of Chivas USA, owned by Mexican club Guadalajara. According to MLS deputy commissioner Ivan Gazidis, the League has had talks with a number of top European clubs expressing interest in MLS ranging from player exchanges to investment to ownership.

Plenty of action off the field, then – but not nearly enough on it. MLS has to know that the sort of soccer on view at MLS Cup 2005 is never going to conquer the USA. MLS is trying to sell its games to a relatively sophisticated set of fans, who have daily TV access to games from all over the world. The boring horrors of crude defensive soccer will wreck any chance MLS has of living up to the "major league" of its title, of becoming a top, crowd-pulling sport to co-exist alongside baseball, basketball and gridiron.

'We need to end all the soccer-bashing by influential people that still exists in this country'

MLS commissioner Don Garber talks to fans just before the awful championship-deciding match

'I'll take

Arsenal's record scorer has made

After the penalty confusion with Robert Pires against Manchester City, will you try to get the routine right one day?
I didn't get it wrong, that is the thing. Next time I shall be the one passing the ball and hopefully it will come off. I am not putting the blame on Robert, it was my idea, but sometimes you are not in control of the whole situation. It was a bit strange to be honest because I really believed we would do it well and I was just waiting for the ball to come to me, but it never came! That is what football is all about – you have a plan and you try things and sometimes they don't come off.

When did you decide you wanted to try to score that way?
I have wanted to do it since I was 16 but I never found anyone to do it with. I finally found someone and he wasn't the right one to do it with! No, I don't mean that against Robert. Maybe you can have a go at me because at 1-0 up the right thing to do was to take a regular penalty – but would that have been the right thing to do? Sometimes you take an amazing penalty and you miss. My intention was for us to be efficient, we didn't want to show off. People will say maybe that wasn't the right time to do it, but, on the flip side, do you want to do it when you are 6-0 up or in a friendly, because then it would lose its impact. The thought was there but it didn't come off, and next time I will be the one pushing the ball to a team-mate.

Why did you have this superstition about not taking penalties you personally have won?
It is not a superstition. I realised that when you have just been brought down at the end of a long run or a stretch for the ball inside the box that you are not fully composed. I missed a couple of penalties because I wasn't composed enough in my mind to do it or I was upset about what had just gone before it. But from now on I am taking the penalties and maybe everyone will be happy. Nobody can say: "Why isn't Thierry taking the pen?" I'll take them and people will see that I can still miss them, although hopefully I shall always score. It will stop the nonsense talk.

How did you feel when you beat Ian Wright's record to become Arsenal's all-time top scorer?
It was a great, great moment. It was also a great

the penalties!'

a decision that should push his goal tally even higher

time to score it [against Sparta in Prague in the Champions League] because you can be in a situation where you break the record but are not winning the game. I knew that after I scored to put us 2-0 ahead that the game was in our hands. I felt great, although for a split second I was disappointed that I hadn't broken the record at Highbury, but then I thought about what it meant to break Wrighty's record and I was over the moon. Wrighty came on the pitch at Highbury before our next game to congratulate me and I was surprised to see him so pleased that his record had been broken. I know I will be disappointed if someone beats mine.

Did you expect to be a main striker when you arrived at Arsenal?
I started my career as a striker but some stuff happened which meant I had to move to the wing. Arsene Wenger brought me back as a centre-forward. My first target when I arrived at Arsenal was to play, then to play well and score goals, but I didn't think back then that I'd be sitting here talking about breaking records.

Did you join Arsenal more than anything to escape Juventus?
No, I would not have gone just anywhere so I could leave. I made it clear when I left Juve that I wanted to go to Arsenal. I cannot say it was easy because it took a long time for the clubs to agree a deal but my choice was always Arsenal.

Did you know anything about the Real Madrid interest?
No, but I knew they wanted me when I was 18. It made a big story in France because I got fined for talking to them, but after that I didn't know of any further interest. In any case, my mind was on Arsenal.

How did you start playing football?
If my father had taken me to a swimming pool for the first time then I'm sure I would have been a swimmer now, but he took me to a football pitch to kick a ball and that is what I am doing right now. I was four years old when one Saturday he said "come with me" and we went to the park and started kicking a football together.

Which players did you admire when you started out in football?
I played as a striker from the start and I always looked up to Marco Van Basten.

Any particular managers?
Obviously at Monaco we had Arsene Wenger, so he was an influence on me, but at the time there was the great Milan side and so I admired Fabio Capello – he was respected by amazing players. Marcello Lippi did great things at Juve and I had the chance to work with him before he resigned. So those were the two main men for me.

How does all the speculation concerning your contract affect you?
It doesn't bother me and I think you can tell that when you see me on the pitch. It is just a story for the media and there is not a week that goes by when you don't see something about it. To be honest, it has become boring now. I can understand the interest but I said what I had to say at the beginning of the season and my mind won't change [Henry stated that he would not discuss his contract during the season].

Moving on to France and the World Cup: in 1998 you played every match except the Final. How did you feel about that?
First of all, winning the World Cup at the age of 20 and at home was something amazing. But I was gutted not playing in the Final. I was meant to be brought on in the second half towards the end but then Marcel Desailly got sent off and that changed the plan. I have to say I forgot about that when it was my turn to lift the trophy at the end of the game.

Why did it all go wrong at the 2002 finals?
Without looking for excuses, most of our players were playing in big leagues and big club tournaments and going far in their league or in the Champions League, so when it came to the World Cup not just France but a lot of big teams went home early. Brazil went on to win but Ronaldinho was playing with PSG, who were not involved in European competition and finished 10th in the League; Rivaldo was on the bench at Barcelona; Ronaldo had come back after injury. They were the players who made the difference and maybe it was because they were fresher. South Korea went far but not only did they have an amazing team, but they were also all fresh. Turkey were all fresh.

What about Euro 2004?
The same thing. Big teams with big players went home early. There were too many games that year for them to handle. It is difficult because I am the first to say that if I can be in all the games then I would love to be in them all, but sometimes we are only human beings and the opposition let you know that you are not a machine. But we were not great either, which didn't help.

How do national coaches Aime Jacquet, Roger Lemerre, Jacques Santini and now Raymond Domenech compare?
After winning the World Cup they called Jacquet "God". I was a big fan of Bordeaux when I was young and he was their coach at the time, so for me when I arrived in the national team the respect was already there. He got the respect of all the players. The same could not be said for the press, as he was getting hammered all the time. The thing I will say about him is that he got the players together; there were no stars, it was a hard-working team. We didn't have a big striker so it was a team built on defence and togetherness, and that was shown when we conceded two goals in the whole World Cup finals.

Lemerre was the same because he was assistant to Jacquet and he just carried it on, even though in 2002 it didn't work. But don't forget that he won Euro 2000, which was a great achievement.

Santini was different. His style was different – we had been playing 4-5-1 but when he came we went to 4-4-2. We qualified easily for Euro 2004 but we lost against Greece in the quarter-finals because we didn't take our chances and so we went out. People had a go at Santini, although I don't think overall he did a bad job.

With Domenech there are more stories than the other three put together. It has been very difficult for him because when he took over virtually a whole generation had retired from international football and he had to start with new young players. You need time in situations like that but we didn't have time because the World Cup qualifying campaign was starting. Early on, it didn't look like we were going to qualify and the press had a go at him. Then players like Zidane and Thuram came out of retirement and we qualified…and now the press are asking whether or not he is the man to take us to the finals.

What about France's prospects in Germany next summer?
We have qualified and that is the main thing. Our senior players have come back on board and we are now all looking forward to going to the finals.

Interview by Keir Radnedge

'I was surprised Wrighty looked so pleased that I'd broken his record'

World Cup woes

The Danish striker is bitter about missing out on the Germany finals

JON DAHL TOMASSON surveyed the wreckage of Denmark's failure to reach the World Cup finals and pulled no punches with his verdict. He believes it is a travesty the Danes missed out – their first absence from a major tournament since 1994 – and attacked the style of play of Ukraine, the winners of Denmark's qualifying group, which was widely regarded as the toughest of the European section since it also contained 2002 World Cup semi-finalists Turkey and European champions Greece.

"My opinion is that Ukraine play a very boring game," Tomasson says. "I don't enjoy their style of football, and I think they will come back from the World Cup finals with zero points.

"I also think it's a huge shame for Denmark not to be at the World Cup. We are a side who should be there. If we had played at our best, we would have won this group for sure. But it hasn't gone our way. We have been unlucky, suffering a lot of injuries and having a few bad moments, like getting red cards at the wrong time.

"You know, Denmark has had an incredible run over the last 20 years for a small country. But I don't think we're in a transition period. I think our team would have done well in Germany."

So, who does Tomasson rate of the qualifiers? "I think the favourites are Brazil," says the 29-year-old. "And England are high up there as well. Wayne Rooney is an outstanding young player."

Tomasson, who has 79 caps and scored 38 goals for his country, has been denied the chance to appear on the world stage in Germany, but ironically he is already in the country having opted to leave Milan's stellar squad to join Stuttgart in the summer. The Bundesliga side didn't even qualify for this season's Champions League, but the appeal of being a first-choice player again after years spent largely as a substitute in Italy was too tempting.

And despite Stuttgart's slow start under new coach Giovanni Trapattoni, Tomasson is convinced he has made the right move. "I had three years with the best club in the world, but I wanted to try something else – a new country and a new culture," he explains. "Of course, there was also the issue of wanting to play 90 minutes in matches. It is frustrating when you score two goals in one game and then spend the next match on the substitutes' bench. Ninety minutes every week is very important – it makes you feel happy. I can imagine it was the same feeling for Michael Owen when he left Real Madrid to join Newcastle."

Tomasson is best remembered in England for one difficult season at Newcastle, where as a raw, young import he had to play out of position – as a central striker as opposed to a supporting striker – when Alan Shearer suffered a long-term injury. It was the worst year of the Dane's career, and although he is polite about his time in the Premiership, it's unlikely he will make a return to the English League. Besides, he is not thinking about making a move any time soon – simply concentrating on making the most of his spell in the Bundesliga.

"I had the opportunity to go to a lot of different countries [Benfica and Marseille were also possible destinations]. But I had never played in Germany and I wanted to try the Bundesliga. I felt it would be fun, and that's so vital in sport. You should have a smile on your face. It's the best game in the world – but who wants to play when it's boring?"

Jim Holden

'If we had played at our best, we would have won our qualifying group'

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32 for Leipzig

We run through the contenders ahead of the finals draw on December 9

Skipper and scorer…Angola's Akwa

● ANGOLA

How they qualified: The Black Antelopes topped African Group 4 ahead of continental heavyweights Nigeria to reach their first World Cup finals.
Coach: Luis Goncalves Oliveira, Angola-born and previously in charge of the country's Olympic and youth teams.
Key men: Benfica starlet Pedro Mantorras, injured for much of the qualifiers; midfielder Paulo Figueiredo; captain and goalscoring midfielder Akwa.
Talking point: Will Oliveira stick with his squad of largely Angola-based players, or try to unearth more Portugal-based players with Angolan heritage?

● ARGENTINA

How they qualified: With a comfortable cruise through the marathon South American section, eventually finishing second to Brazil.
Coach: Jose Pekerman. He oversaw a string of successes at Under-17 and Under-20 level when Argentina's youth team boss.
Key men: Juan Roman Riquelme, a classic midfield playmaker around whom Pekerman has built the side; Juan Pablo Sorin, successor to Juan Veron as captain; Hernan Crespo, first-choice striker despite a lack of games at Chelsea.
Talking points: There are raging debates over Riquelme – many feel he is not pacy enough – and whether Veron should be given another chance. Will Barcelona wonderkid Lionel Messi be fast-tracked into the starting XI in time for the finals?

● AUSTRALIA

How they qualified: In dramatic style, beating Uruguay 4-2 on penalties in the Oceania-South America play-off after a 1-1 aggregate draw.
Coach: Guus Hiddink. The charismatic Dutchman, who is still in charge of PSV Eindhoven, was parachuted in ahead of the play-offs. Will now oversee the World Cup preparations.
Key men: Oceania Player of the Year Tim Cahill; Liverpool winger Harry Kewell; keeper and penalty shoot-out hero Mark Schwarzer.
Talking point: How much time will Hiddink be able to give to his international commitments while also in charge at PSV?

● BRAZIL

How they qualified: With relative ease, compared to the struggles of four years ago, topping the South American group and losing only to Argentina in Buenos Aires and Ecuador at altitude in Quito.
Coach: Carlos Alberto Parreira, the winning coach in 1994 and now in his third spell in charge.
Key men: The Famous Five – Ronaldo, Ronaldinho, Adriano, Robinho and Kaka – get all the attention, but Emerson plays a crucial role in midfield.
Talking point: How to fit all the Famous Five into the starting XI; at least one of them is likely to be disappointed.

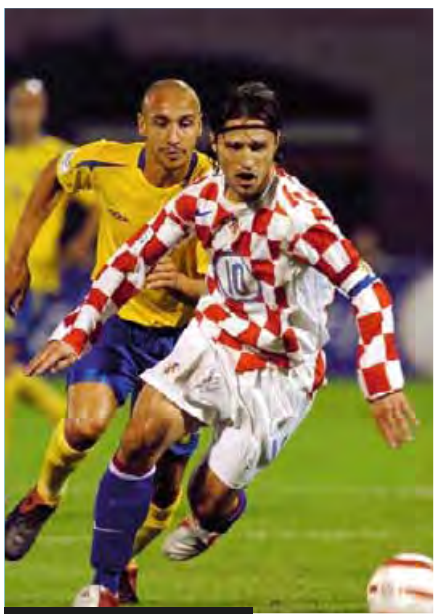
● COSTA RICA

How they qualified: After a slow start, the Ticos finished third behind the United States and Mexico in the CONCACAF final stage group.
Coach: Brazil-born Alexandre Guimaraes, who played in Costa Rica's Italia 90 side and was coach four years ago in Korea/Japan.
Key man: Paulo Wanchope, Costa Rica's all-time top scorer. Now playing in Qatar, he will retire from international football after the World Cup.
Talking point: Guimaraes was recalled to take charge of the national side in mid-campaign, replacing Colombian Jorge Luis Pinto.

Question of time…Australia coach Guus Hiddink

● CROATIA

How they qualified: As winners of European Group 8, ahead of Sweden and Bulgaria.


Versatile…Croatia's Niko Kovac

Coach: Zlatko Kranjcar, a former Rapid Wien striker and Croatian title-winning coach with Dinamo Zagreb and NK Zagreb. Succeeded Otto Baric last year and gave a debut to his son, Niko, in his first game.
Key men: Versatile defender/midfielder Niko Kovac; Rangers striker Dado Prso.
Talking point: The 2006 finals will be a home from home for the Croats. Half their first-choice side once played or do play in the Bundesliga (Niko and Robert Kovac, Josip Simunic, Marko Babic, Ivan Klasnic and Jurica Vranjes).

● CZECH REPUBLIC

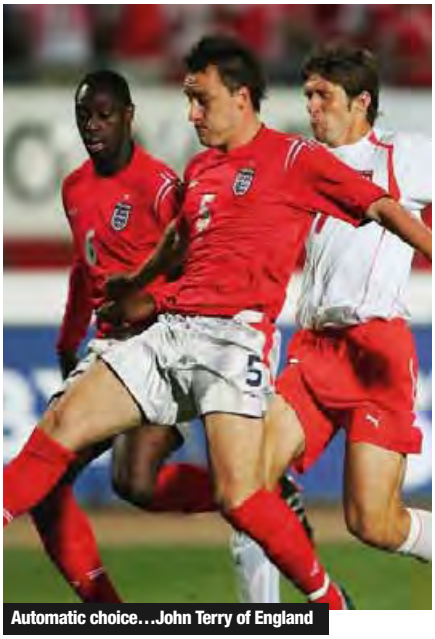
How they qualified: By beating Norway 2-0 on aggregate in the play-offs after finishing second to Holland in European Group 1.
Coach: Karel Bruckner, a former boss of the Under-21s who took charge of the senior side in December 2001 and has not looked back.
Key men: Midfielder Tomas Rosicky; keeper Petr Cech; Pavel Nedved.
Talking point: Can Nedved, who came out of international retirement for the play-offs, be persuaded to stay on for the World Cup?

ECUADOR

How they qualified: By finishing third in the South American table.
Coach: Luis Suarez, a Colombian who succeeded compatriot Hernan Dario Gomez after the team's disastrous showing at the 2004 Copa America.
Key man: Agustin Delgado. The former Southampton striker is now much happier playing his club football back in Ecuador, for Barcelona.
Talking point: Ecuador secured 23 of their 28 points in qualifying when playing at home in Quito, 1,850m above sea level.

ENGLAND

How they qualified: By topping European Group 6, ahead of Poland and Austria.
Coach: Sven Goran Eriksson, the world's highest-paid national coach and now preparing for his third major tournament.
Key men: Wayne Rooney, already a talismanic figure having just turned 20; fast-improving


Automatic choice…John Terry of England

midfielder Frank Lampard; John Terry, now Eriksson's first-choice centre-back.
Talking points: Can Lampard and Steven Gerrard both play in central midfield? Why won't Eriksson even countenance a 3-5-2 formation, which would solve so many problems? Has the recent friendly victory over Argentina led to over-confidence?

FRANCE

How they qualified: As winners of European Group 4, despite a shaky start. The return of

Back and forward…France returnee Claude Makelele takes on young German striker Lukas Podolski

Zinedine Zidane, Claude Makelele and Lilian Thuram sparked the revival.
Coach: Raymond Domenech, a former national Under-21 boss who succeeded Jacques Santini after Euro 2004.
Key men: Zidane; striker Thierry Henry; midfielder Makelele.
Talking points: Can Zidane, at 33, still carry France through a whole tournament? Who is first-choice keeper, Fabien Barthez or Gregory Coupet? Who partners Henry?

GERMANY

How they qualified: As hosts.
Coach: Jurgen Klinsmann, the former national team striker who, famously, has continued to live in California while Germany boss.
Key men: Midfielder and captain Michael Ballack; young Koln striker Lukas Podolski.
Talking points: How long can Klinsmann continue to live Stateside before he bows to pressure to move to Germany? Will he continue his controversial policy of rotating his feuding goalkeepers, Oliver Kahn and Jens Lehmann? Will the team play a more attacking game at the finals to keep the home crowd on their side?

GHANA

How they qualified: Won African Group 2 ahead of DR Congo and South Africa to reach their first World Cup finals.
Coach: Serbian Ratomir Dujkovic, who steered Rwanda to the 2004 African Nations Cup finals.
Key men: Dynamic midfield duo Michael Essien and Stephen Appiah; Roma defender Samuel Kuffour.
Talking point: How will Kuffour be welcomed by his team-mates after missing most of the qualifying campaign having fallen out with Dujkovic?

HOLLAND

How they qualified: As winners of European Group 1, ahead of the Czech Republic and Romania.
Coach: Marco Van Basten, legendary former Ajax and Milan striker in his first senior coaching role. Previously in charge of Ajax reserves.

Dynamic…Ghana's Stephen Appiah

Key men: Hamburg midfielder Rafael Van der Vaart; Man Utd striker Ruud Van Nistelrooy; Ajax midfielder Wesley Sneijder.
Talking point: How many of the youngsters blooded by Van Basten, such as Ryan Babel, will make the World Cup cut at the expense of established players such as Edgar Davids, Mark Van Bommel and Clarence Seedorf?

IRAN

How they qualified: By taking second place in one of Asia's final stage groups, behind Japan.
Coach: Branko Ivankovic, a Croatian who was appointed in February 2002.
Key men: Asian Player of the Year Ali Karimi, who joined Bayern Munich last summer; Javad Nekounam, the rising star of the Iranian League.
Talking point: Will the German crowds get behind the Bundesliga based trio of Karimi, Vahid Hashemian and Mehdi Mahdavikia?

Big at the back…Italy's Alessandro Nesta

ITALY

How they qualified: As comfortable winners of European Group 5, ahead of Norway.
Coach: Marcello Lippi. The former Juventus and Inter boss succeeded Giovanni Trapattoni after Euro 2004.
Key men: Roma forward Francesco Totti; Milan defender Alessandro Nesta; Milan midfielder and free-kick specialist Andrea Pirlo.
Talking point: Lippi has an abundance of attacking riches – Totti, Alex Del Piero, Luca Toni, Alberto Gilardino – but faces a very un-Italian problem: who provides cover for Nesta and Fabio Cannavaro in defence?

IVORY COAST

How they qualified: As winners of African Group 3, surprisingly finishing ahead of Cameroon.
Coach: Henri Michel, a former coach of France.
Key men: Chelsea striker Didier Drogba (nine goals in qualifying); his strike partner Aruna Dindane; Arsenal defender Kolo Toure.
Talking point: The parallels with 2002 surprise package Senegal, who also made full use of their France-born players with African parentage.

JAPAN

How they qualified: As winners of their Asian final stage group, ahead of Iran.
Coach: Zico. The former Brazil star has spent a number of years in Japan as player and then coach.
Key man: Playmaker Shunsuke Nakamura.
Talking point: Japan continue to grow in stature, having won the 2004 Asian Cup and beaten European champions Greece and drawn with world champions Brazil at this year's Confederations Cup.

MEXICO

How they qualified: By finishing second in the final CONCACAF group, behind rivals USA.
Coach: Ricardo Lavolpe, a former Argentina keeper who was appointed in October 2002 after a spell with Mexican club side Toluca.
Key men: Bolton striker and all-time national team top scorer Jared Borgetti; Barcelona defender Rafael Marquez.
Talking point: Lavolpe has attracted much criticism for his decision to field naturalised overseas-born players such as Guillermo Franco, a native of Argentina.

PARAGUAY

How they qualified: By finishing fourth in the South American group.
Coach: Anibal Ruiz, a Paraguayan who was in charge for the whole of the marathon qualifying campaign.
Key man: Bayern Munich striker Roque Santa Cruz.
Talking point: Will Santa Cruz, who postponed a knee operation to attend his daughter's birth, be fit in time for the World Cup?

POLAND

How they qualified: As one of the two best runners-up in the European section. They finished second to England in Group 6.

Fitness concerns…Paraguay's Roque Santa Cruz

Past his best?…Luis Figo of Portugal

Coach: Pawel Janas, a former Poland defender and Legia Warsaw coach who succeeded Zbigniew Boniek as national boss in December 2002.
Key men: Celtic striker Maciej Zurawski; Liverpool keeper Jerzy Dudek; captain Tomasz Hajto.
Talking point: The jury is out on Zurawski and strike partner Tomasz Frankowski. It's one thing piling up the goals against Azerbaijan, Wales, Northern Ireland and Austria, quite another to do it against the world's best defences.

PORTUGAL

How they qualified: As comfortable winners of European Group 3, ahead of Slovakia and Russia.
Coach: Luiz Felipe Scolari, who led Brazil to triumph in Korea/Japan in 2002.
Key men: Record cap-holder Luis Figo; Barcelona midfielder Deco; Man Utd winger Cristiano Ronaldo.
Talking point: Is Figo a spent force? Portugal's captain has been mediocre this term for Inter and was jeered by national team fans when substituted in Portugal's final qualifier against Latvia in Porto.

SAUDI ARABIA

How they qualified: By winning their final stage group in Asia, ahead of South Korea, to reach their fourth successive finals.
Coach: Gabriel Calderon, a former Argentina international and self-confessed international "novice" in coaching terms.
Key man: Striker Sami Al-Jaber.
Talking point: Will Calderon be dropped in favour of a big-name coach, as has happened before with the Saudis?

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

How they qualified: As winners of European Group 7, ahead of Spain.
Coach: Ilija Petkovic, a former Yugoslavia international who replaced Dejan Savicevic in July 2003. Was previously in charge of the national side for two months in 2001 before taking a job in China.

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Key for Korea…Park Ji-sung

Key man: Atletico Madrid striker Mateja Kezman.
Talking point: The team conceded only one goal in the qualifiers, the lowest number in the European section. But can they keep up the good work in Germany against much tougher opponents?

SOUTH KOREA

How they qualified: By taking second place in one of Asia's final stage groups, behind Saudi Arabia.
Coach: Dick Advocaat, the former Rangers and Holland boss, who replaced his beleaguered Dutch compatriot Jo Bonfrere earlier this year.
Key man: Man Utd midfielder Park Ji-sung.
Talking point: The Koreans have again gone Dutch with the appointment of Advocaat, but the chances of him emulating compatriot Guus Hiddink's achievements of four years ago are slim.

SPAIN

How they qualified: With an emphatic play-off victory against Slovakia after finishing a disappointing second to Serbia & Montenegro in European Group 7.
Coach: Luis Aragones. The 67-year-old coached numerous club sides before succeeding Inaki Saez at the national team helm in July 2004.
Key men: Strikers Raul and Fernando Torres; Liverpool midfielder Xabi Alonso.
Talking point: The Spanish have already forgotten the fact they qualified via the play-offs, but is the optimism – *Marca's* headline on the day after qualification was "The World Cup is ours" – justified?

SWEDEN

How they qualified: As one of the two best runners-up in the European section, having finished level on points with Group 8 winners Croatia.
Coach: Lars Lagerback, now in sole charge after Tommy Soderberg's retirement.
Key men: Juventus forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic; Barcelona striker Henrik Larsson; Arsenal midfielder Freddie Ljungberg.
Talking point: The attacking trio of Ibrahimovic, Larsson and Ljungberg offer Sweden a chance of emulating the 1994 team's feat of reaching the semi-finals.

SWITZERLAND

How they qualified: On away goals in a fiery play-off against Turkey, having finished second behind France and ahead of Israel and the Republic of Ireland in European Group 4.
Coach: Kobi Kuhn, a former Swiss international.
Key man: Alex Frei, top scorer in qualifying.
Talking point: Will the Swiss be punished for the post-match brawl with Turkish players after the play-off second leg in Istanbul?

TOGO

How they qualified: The Hawks upset the odds by finishing top of African Group 1, ahead of Senegal, to reach their first World Cup finals.
Coach: Stephen Keshi, Nigeria's captain at the 1994 World Cup.
Key man: Monaco striker Emmanuel Adebayor, one of only a handful of overseas-based players in the squad.
Talking point: The poor travel arrangements of the Togolese FA, who were criticised by Keshi after the recent friendly defeats by Paraguay and Iran.

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

How they qualified: By beating Bahrain in the CONCACAF-Asia play-off after finishing fourth in the final CONCACAF group. Now heading for their first World Cup finals.
Coach: Leo Beenhakker, coach of Holland at the 1990 World Cup, who was brought in halfway through the qualifying campaign.
Key men: Former Man Utd and Aston Villa forward Dwight Yorke, who plays in midfield for his country; Birmingham striker Stern John; Port Vale midfielder Chris Birchall, whose mother was born in Trinidad.
Talking point: Trinidad's squad in Germany is likely to feature a record number of players from the English Football League.

Attacking threat…Sweden's Zlatan Ibrahimovic

TUNISIA

How they qualified: As winners of African Group 5, ahead of north African rivals Morocco.
Coach: Roger Lemerre, coach of France at Euro 2000, which they won, and the 2002 World Cup.
Key men: Goalscoring sensation Haikel Gmamdia; Francileudo dos Santos, Brazil-born star of Tunisia's 2004 African Nations Cup triumph.
Talking point: Lemerre became the first coach to win continental titles in Europe and Africa when Tunisia won the Nations Cup last year.

Trinidadian mum…Chris Birchall

UKRAINE

How they qualified: By winning the tough European Group 2, ahead of Turkey, Denmark and European champions Greece, to reach their first major finals.
Coach: Oleh Blokhin, 1975 European Footballer of the Year and now also a Ukrainian MP.
Key man: Andrii Shevchenko, reigning European Footballer of the Year.
Talking point: Can Ukraine show that they are more than just a one-man show? They are well-organised, hard to break down, and don't score that many goals…shades of Greece 2004.

UNITED STATES

How they qualified: As winners of the CONCACAF final group section, ahead of Mexico on head-to-head record.
Coach: Bruce Arena, who will be the longest-serving of all 32 coaches in Germany.
Key men: Manchester City midfielder Claudio Reyna; San Jose star Landon Donovan; PSV winger DaMarcus Beasley.
Talking point: Can injury-prone captain Reyna, now 31, stay fit for the finals?

Compiled by Gavin Hamilton & Nick Bidwell

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The final five

Australia, the Czech Republic, Spain, Switzerland and Trinidad & Tobago filled the last remaining places at Germany 2006

Australian hero…keeper Mark Schwarzer

SOUTH AMERICA were left with only four teams at the World Cup – the same as CONCACAF – after Uruguay, who finished fifth in the region's single qualifying group, lost their play-off against Australia on penalties. Both teams won their home leg 1-0, before Australia ended 210 minutes of unremitting tension by winning the shoot-out 4-2 to avenge their 3-1 aggregate defeat by Uruguay in a play-off for the 2002 finals.

The Uruguayans had a slight edge over the two legs but failed to take their chances, while Australia had clearly worked more thoroughly on their penalty-taking and had done a far better job of organising the 20-hour flight from Montevideo back to Sydney between the two legs, which were only four days apart.

The Socceroos had chartered their own Boeing 767 plane, while Uruguay, who got themselves into an administrative tangle as they failed to find a charter plane, flew on a scheduled flight in economy class because business was sold out. While Uruguay got the usual "meat or chicken" choice, Australia were given a specially-prepared menu rich in carbohydrates.

Australia had made a bright start to the first leg, Mark Viduka forcing a superb save from Fabian Carini with a long-range free-kick, before Uruguay took control. Dario Rodriguez headed the goal in the 35th minute from one of Alvaro Recoba's wicked, inswinging free-kicks, and the hosts were repeatedly denied a second goal in a desperate last half-hour by superb goalkeeping from Mark Schwarzer. Uruguay were also denied a penalty when Recoba appeared to be tripped by Schwarzer.

Repeat story

In the second leg, Uruguay were agonisingly close to a precious away goal as an early Recoba free-kick rebounded off Schwarzer, Diego Lugano headed wide and Recoba sent a shot wide with only Schwarzer to beat.

The turning point came on the half-hour when Australia defender Tony Popovic appeared to elbow Recoba in the face, an offence for which he escaped with a booking.

Australia coach Guus Hiddink,

Heading for Germany…(from left) Czech Republic players pile up; Luis Garcia strikes for Spain; Swiss players run the gauntlet of Turkish anger; Trinidad & Tobago's Stern John celebrates

never one to look a gift horse in the mouth, quickly replaced Popovic with forward Harry Kewell, who unwittingly played a key part in the goal five minutes later, when he miscued his shot and the ball ran kindly for Marco Bresciano to fire home.

Richard Morales missed another sitter for Uruguay after the break, and although the South Americans tired, Australia rarely threatened to score again, even after visiting captain Paolo Montero limped off.

In Europe, Turkey were the most distraught last-fence fallers as the Czech Republic, Spain and Switzerland clinched Europe's last three finals places.

The Turks had recently recalled veteran forward Hakan Sukur in the hope that he would prove talismanic in the bid to thrill the large Turkish community in Germany.

It was not to be. The Turks fell short on the pitch during their away goals defeat and the players, officials and security staff behaved disgracefully. The price they pay may be suspension from 2010 as well as failure to qualify for 2006.

Coach Fatih Terim saw everything going according to plan as Turkey edged within four minutes of a "mere" 1-0 defeat in the first leg in Berne. Defender Philippe Senderos had headed home a Ludovic Magnin free-kick on 41 minutes and that appeared to be the sum total of the hosts' attacking reward until substitute Valon Behrami grabbed a second Swiss goal with almost his first touch.

The win was only the second for the Swiss in the last eight meetings between the two sides and ended the Turks' undefeated away run in the qualifying series.

Back in Istanbul, however, the Turks struggled. Alexander Frei shot Switzerland ahead with a crucial away goal from a second-minute penalty after a handball by Alpay Ozalan. Two headed goals from Tuncay Sanli and a penalty on 52 minutes from Necati Ates pulled Turkey level on aggregate.

But when Marco Streller struck back after a late breakaway, the Turks were left needing two goals in six minutes. Tuncay did get one, completing his hat-trick, but it was not enough.

That was the signal for mayhem. Switzerland's Benjamin Huggel appeared to kick a Turkish coach as he and his team-mates ran a gauntlet of missiles as they ran from the pitch.

Blatter shock

"I've never seen anything like it," said Sepp Blatter, president of FIFA, which has launched an investigation.

Slovakia were none too happy either at their exit against Spain, though their fans and players did not lose control in quite the same way.

That tie was decided in the first leg in Madrid, with Spain winning 5-1 with a hat-trick from Luis Garcia and further goals from Fernando Torres and Fernando Morientes. Garcia also gifted Szilard Nemeth the Slovaks' goal with an under-hit backpass.

Slovak coach Dusan Galis raged later about the expulsion of defender Marian Had for dissent at the penalty that allowed Spain to push clear. He said: "I want to congratulate Spain on their win but I am upset that, in a big football country like this, the referee was so favourable to the home team. If the best players are in the World Cup we should also have the best officials. Slovaks will have seen this on TV and I don't think they will be giving Spain a warm welcome for the second leg."

In fact, the margin of first-leg defeat meant a subdued response from fans back in Bratislava. Filip Holosko and substitute David Villa exchanged second-half goals and Spain cruised through 6-2 on aggregate.

Norway's hopes against the Czech Republic quickly became bogged down in the mud of Oslo's Ullevaal stadium pitch. The visitors seized the away advantage with a first-half header from Vladimir Smicer.

The Czechs repeated their 1-0 win back in Prague, with Tomas Rosicky the scorer. All that remains now is for coach Karel Bruckner to persuade Pavel Nedved – who came out of international retirement because of an injury crisis – to stick with the team through to the finals.

Wrexham defender Dennis Lawrence was the unlikely hero for Trinidad & Tobago against Bahrain, scoring the only goal of the second leg in Manama to give his side a 2-1 aggregate win, sparking wild celebrations back home.

The momentum had been with Bahrain after they had held Trinidad & Tobago to a 1-1 draw in the first leg four days earlier. A full house in the Hasely Crawford stadium in Port-of-Spain had seen the Gulf side take the lead against the run of play through Salman Husein's powerful close-range header from a corner.

Bahrain's gameplan had been to sit back and wait for opportunities to hit the hosts on the counter-attack. The strategy appeared to be working as the CONCACAF side failed to make the most of their superior possession.

However, Port Vale midfielder Chris Birchall rescued the game with a screaming 25-yard half-volley with 12 minutes remaining.

The second leg proved to be a more physical affair, with both teams nervous of committing an error that would cost them World Cup qualification.

The breakthrough came in the 49th minute, when Lawrence headed home a Dwight Yorke corner, and Trinidad's lead was never seriously threatened.

"I'm so proud of the players and for the people of the whole country," said Leo Beenhakker, the veteran Dutch coach who took charge of Trinidad & Tobago halfway through the World Cup qualifiers and engineered a remarkable turnaround.

"When you've been in football like I have for 40 years, you have many highlights in your career, and this is definitely one of them."

Brian Homewood, Keir Radnedge & Gavin Hamilton

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THE STADIUMS

Munich

Great views…fans are much closer to the action at the new Munich stadium, which dominates the local skyline (below)

The luminous rubber dinghy!

ALTHOUGH GERMAN Nobel Prize-winning author Thomas Mann died 50 years ago, his famous comment that "Munich glows" still strikes a chord today. That is because of the city's brand new Allianz Arena, the 66,000-capacity venue which, for reasons of FIFA commercial policy, will be rebranded the Munich World Cup stadium for the duration of the finals.

The stadium is spectacular enough in daylight. The silvery grey airship-like structure dominates the skyline of the Frottmaning district of northern Munich close to the main road from the airport to the city centre. However, it is by night that it really takes hold of the senses, the 2,816 air-filled polymer cushions that make up the facade and roof being illuminated in one or a mixture of three colours: red or blue for resident clubs Bayern and 1860, white when in national team or World Cup mode.

The stadium, which locals have dubbed the *Schlauchboot* (rubber dinghy), was the brainchild of celebrated Swiss architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, whose other credits include the Tate Modern gallery in London and Basle's impressive St Jakob Park stadium. It was certainly high time Munich had a new purpose-built football arena. The Olympic stadium, site of the 1972 Games and West Germany's World Cup Final win in 1974, had never been particularly fan-friendly. Although the bedouin tent-style roof was eyecatching, it offered little protection from the weather, while the athletics track kept fans far removed from the action, dampening any attempts to stoke up an atmosphere.

Munich's new pride and joy is another ball park entirely. All three tiers are safe from the elements, fans are revelling in the novel experience of being able to watch a game without binoculars, and crowd noise no longer disappears into the ether. The facilities are also so much better – there are 28 food kiosks, two massive restaurants, 2,200 business seats, 106 private boxes, shops, a kindergarten and 11,000 parking places.

'No central or local government money went into the stadium'

Advocates of the "small state" will be pleased that no central or local government money went into the new stadium. Bayern and 1860 will foot the full £240million bill themselves, helped in no small part by the Allianz insurance company, who gave £64m for the naming rights until 2021. Munich taxpayers have to dig deep only for improvements to transport infrastructure.

All credit to the engineers and construction crew for completing the project in just two and a half years. It was a shame, then, that corruption had to rear its head, with Karl-Heinz Wildmoser Jnr, the head of the stadium holding company and an 1860 director, sent to prison for four and a half years for taking kick-backs from Austrian builders Alpine in return for inside information about the contract bidding process.

It's funny to think that when Germany were first awarded the finals, the initial plan was to extensively revamp the Olympic stadium. That, however, did not sit well with its architect, Professor Gunter Behnisch, and when he vetoed any alterations, thoughts turned to building anew. We have a lot to thank Behnisch for. An old sporting treasure was preserved, a new one created.

Nick Bidwell

NEW!

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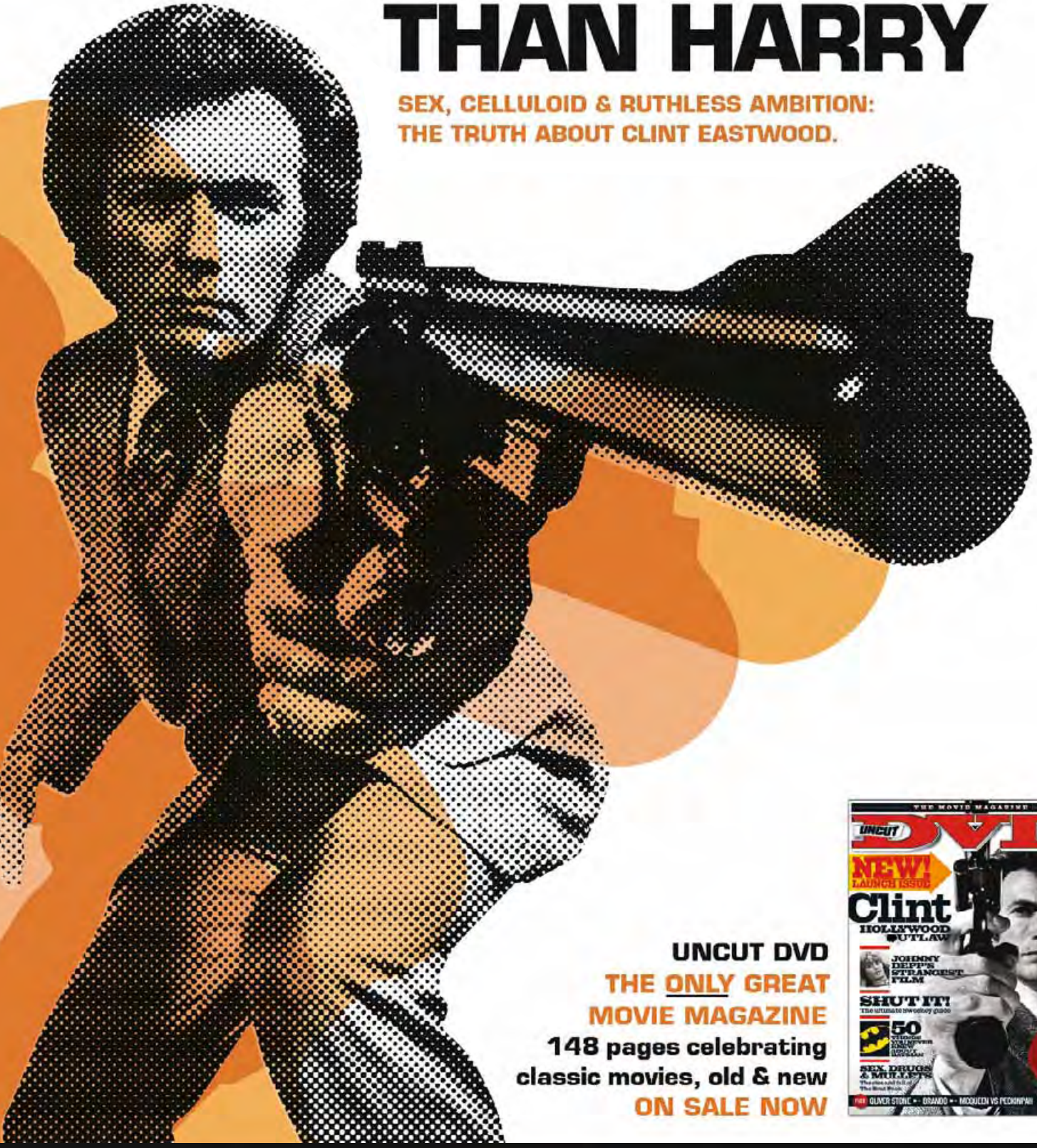

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MAIN MEN

Spectacular finish…Lampard volleys the winner against Poland at Old Trafford which meant England topped their World Cup qualifying group

England's player of the year is world's best, says Mourinho

Frank Lampard

A YEAR AGO, Jose Mourinho said Frank Lampard was perhaps the most complete player in Europe. Now he has upgraded his opinion. "I don't think there is any way now that Frank can improve because for me he is the best player in the world at the moment," the Chelsea manager said after Lampard scored twice in a 4-2 win over Blackburn to take his League tally to 100. "I don't know what the people who organise the international awards do at the weekends because only English people seem to recognise what this player is.

"Frank was the best player in the Premiership last season. His defensive work is incredible, he can pass over a long distance, he can pass over a short distance, he can score goals. I would not change him for any other player in the world."

In fact, inside information suggests Lampard will be well placed in the various end-of-year polls despite a voting split between him and his England team-mate, Steven Gerrard of Liverpool.

The irony is that the attempt to successfully accommodate the two players in the England team has become one of the coaching staff's major preoccupations ahead of the World Cup finals. Lampard and Gerrard are both adept at forging forward from midfield, but doing so within the same team has reduced their effectiveness. At Euro 2004, with both patrolling the central acre, England struggled to bridge the chasm that opened up between midfield and the far-distant strikers. But a solution finally emerged in the 3-2 friendly win over Argentina in November, when Lampard was used at the apex of the midfield diamond, in a similar role to the one he fulfils with Chelsea, with Gerrard on the left.

'I have never seen a player improve so much and so fast'

Michael Owen

In this formation, Lampard is far better placed to keep in touch with Michael Owen and the wandering Wayne Rooney. Owen has made no secret of his admiration for the enormous strides made by Lampard, saying: "I have never, ever seen a player improve so much and so fast as Frank. He seems to be scoring in almost every game, either for club or country.

"Obviously it helps that he is playing in a good team at Chelsea and that there are team-mates like Claude Makelele behind him. They allow Frank the licence to make whatever run he wants and not be scared of what could go wrong behind him. But you still have to put in the work."

Lampard was always destined for a powerful career in the game. He has the family pedigree. His father – also Frank – won the FA Cup twice with West Ham, and so it was natural that his even more talented son should grow up in the West Ham academy.

He established himself as a regular in midfield, captained the England Under-21s and made his senior national team debut under Kevin Keegan. Chelsea paid a then club record £12million for him in 2001, and his development was such that he was one of the driving forces behind their Premiership title success last season. Earlier this year he was voted both England's Footballer of the Year (by the journalists) and Player of the Year (by his fellow professionals).

Very few players at Chelsea can be considered certain starters but Lampard is one of them. He has also learned how to handle his rise to fame and appreciate the good life. He represented the club at the funeral of a little girl supporter who had been introduced to the players a fortnight earlier during their Premiership-winning celebrations and said: "Her strength and character put everything into perspective."

Keir Radnedge

The French are gambling on the 33-year-old staying fit for Germany

Zinedine Zidane

THE FRENCH MAY love their extra-marital affairs but they show no sign of ever being unfaithful to the legend that is Zinedine Zidane, universally depicted in the Gallic press as the man who gave the kiss of life to *Les Bleus* after their semi-conscious start to the 2006 World Cup qualifiers.

Zidane was sanctified by his two headed goals in France's 1998 World Cup Final victory over Brazil, and his shock decision this summer to come out of international retirement – a *volte-face* copied by Lilian Thuram and Claude Makelele – was met with quasi-religious fervour by the nation's football lovers. The flock were not to be disappointed as reinstated captain Zizou led them to the away win against the Republic of Ireland, draw in Switzerland and home victory over Cyprus that secured their place in next summer's finals.

Who could argue that France are a better side without Zidane as playmaker? The stats show his importance – France have won 63 of the 98 games he has played – and the eyes see it. The team were singularly short of ideas, flair and conviction after his post-Euro 2004 withdrawal. But as soon as the great man was back in harness – sensibly used by coach Raymond Domenech in his preferred position in central midfield and not wasted on the left, as under predecessor Jacques Santini – France instantly became another team, one that actually wanted the ball, did not give it away cheaply and for once offered some attacking threat. Zidane's vast experience and self-belief was the perfect tonic for a team that had lost their way.

'As soon as he was back in harness, France became another team'

It is yet another success story for the kid from the mean streets of Marseille's northern suburbs who went on to worldwide fame. So talented yet so modest and humble, he can do no wrong in the eyes of the nation.

The problem is that thoughts of past glories tend to cloud the judgements of today when regarding heroes such as Zidane. Yes, his return has made a difference; *Les Bleus* need all the help they can muster when their coach seems determined to play a number of them out of position. But no one should be under any illusion that he remains at the peak of his powers. The tricks, turns and awareness are still in evidence but his body is not wearing nearly as well. Increasing muscular problems have sapped his endurance and this term a chronic groin problem has sidelined him for several weeks. As Zizou readily admits, 40 games a season is now out of the question. He can deliver, but only intermittently.

And there is the rub for France. At the heart of their World Cup plans they have a 33-year-old of declining physical powers. Should injury or fatigue strike him down, what do they do then?

Just as worrying is his working relationship with Thierry Henry. In seven years of playing together for the national team, they have only rarely seemed on the same wavelength. Henry thrives on early balls played into the channels, Zidane likes to stay in possession for longer.

Federation chief Jean-Pierre Escalettes believes Zidane was "taking a risk" in making a comeback. But France are gambling big, too. Brilliant swansong or one tournament too many? We will see.

Nick Bidwell

Returning hero…but France must beware becoming over-reliant on a player who can now deliver only intermittently

WS WORLD SOCCER GLOBAL VIEW Paul Gardner

The Vela mystery

Is Arsenal's deal with Guadalajara for the 16-year-old really signed and sealed?

THE CURIOUS CASE of teenage Mexican striker Carlos Vela and his transfer from Guadalajara to Arsenal raises yet again the thorny problem of how to handle the buying and selling of young players.

Vela, 16, was in the Mexico team that won the recent World Under-17 Championship. I saw all his games and was duly impressed – he's a big boy with speed, balance, smooth ball control and a powerful shot.

He was the tournament's top scorer with five goals, which included two wonderful efforts. Against Australia, he took a long cross on his chest, twisted his body slightly, and as the ball dropped softly to his feet, volleyed home. Against Uruguay, he kept his cool and his balance when, harried by a desperate goalkeeper, he retained possession and skilfully manoeuvred the ball into position for another powerful strike.

There was plenty of courage there, too, as his diving header to open the scoring in the Final against Brazil showed.

Vela reminded me of former Argentina midfielder Ricky Villa, an almost cumbersome runner, but quick to sense a scoring opportunity, and brutally decisive when the crucial moment arrived.

That big clubs would be interested was hardly a surprise, but I'll admit to some confusion when I read, some two months after the tournament, that Arsenal had made a move for Vela. It was difficult to envisage his cool, unhurried Mexican style faring well in the helter-skelter of the Premiership.

But Arsenal's interest was soon confirmed. Vela, of course, has an agent, Eduardo Hernandez, who reported "an excellent experience for Carlos at Arsenal". He added that Vela's parents had tagged along and were "enchanted by London".

Arsene Wenger told the BBC that Vela was "one of the boys we had in training to look at them" and within two weeks came the news that Vela had signed for Arsenal for a reported £2.5million. Spanish newspaper *El Mundo* said he would be loaned to Valencia until he reached 18.

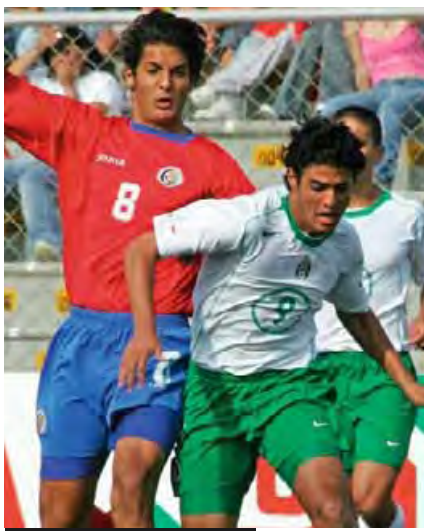
The signing soon received confirmation from Guadalajara. The club's official website said: "It's official that Carlos Vela will belong to Arsenal." Nestor De la Torre, the club's vice-president, added some details: "We made three changes to his contract, all of which were accepted by Arsenal. Vela's sporting rights will go to Arsenal for five years. If Arsenal decide to sell him, Guadalajara will get the first option."

There is just one thing wrong with all this. Under FIFA regulations, the transfer is illegal. The FIFA Regulations for the Status and Transfer of Players, Chapter V, Article 19 is crystal clear. "Protection of Minors. 1) International transfers of players are only permitted if the player is over the age of 18."

There are three exceptions to the rule, one involving players within Europe, another for players who live close to an international borderline, and the third permitting such a move if the player's parents "move to the country in which the new club is located for reasons not linked to football". None of these exceptions apply in the Vela case.

'Under FIFA regulations, the transfer is not permitted until the player reaches the age of 18'

When a player moves from one country to another, an International Transfer Certificate (ITC) must be sent by the national association of the selling club to the national association of the buying club – in this case, from the Mexican federation to the English FA. The FIFA regulation obviously bars the issuance of such an ITC. Without it, the player cannot play for the buying club.



Kid in the middle…Carlos Vela

The FIFA regulation evidently means that Vela cannot move to another country until he is 18, in March 2007. FIFA is aware of the situation and has asked Guadalajara to provide more documentation.

Intriguing. Wenger has stated: "We cannot comment until he reaches 18," and the club remain tight-lipped about any deal, commenting only that they cannot confirm or deny it.

Guadalajara have been much more vocal. Apparently ignorant of or simply not caring about the regulations, president Jorge Vergara announced on November 13: "This evening Guadalajara signed the transfer of Vela to Arsenal. The contract is now in the hands of the Arsenal board of directors." He told Mexican sports paper *Esto* the only thing remaining to be done was for Vela "to travel, and I wish him the best of luck. The sale to an overseas club is satisfying for us, because it means we are producing players."

It is inconceivable Wenger and Guadalajara are unaware of the FIFA regulation. Arsenal's refusal to comment surely confirms that. Why then are Guadalajara so keen to shout the deal from the rooftops? A possible reason is a report (it now seems inevitable when any player deal is being discussed) that Chelsea have expressed interest in Vela – which just might cause Guadalajara to welcome a bidding war.

Counting the cost

Simon Banks examines the financial implications for Manchester United and Arsenal should they fail to qualify for next season's Champions League

Financial forecast…Arsenal plan to have paid for their new ground by 2030

ONE OF THE consequences of Chelsea's rise to the top of English football is that there is one Champions League place fewer at which perennial qualifiers Manchester United and Arsenal can aim. And with Liverpool and other newer contenders such as Wigan, Bolton and Tottenham entering the fray for the remaining slots, United and Arsenal face the very real prospect of failing to qualify for the Champions League for the first time in years.

It is obvious such a failure would have serious financial implications for both clubs. Arsenal are committed to paying back the £260million they have borrowed to finance the building of their Ashburton Grove stadium, while Manchester United will have to find the repayments to J P Morgan and various hedge funds on the £750m of debt they incurred when the Glazer family "bought" the club.

'United appear to have assumed Champions League football is a given'

Arsenal received around £16m from UEFA for winning their group and reaching the last 16 of last season's Champions League; United received £11m for reaching the same stage, the discrepancy being due to them finishing second in their group. To these payments – from a share of the sale of TV and sponsorship rights – can be added substantial sums from ticket sales, catering and corporate hospitality. Arsenal's four home matches will have generated around £4m; United's about £5m, because of their greater capacity and higher number of executive boxes.

If the two clubs were to miss out on the Champions League, Arsenal are better placed to deal with the financial consequences, given that United have almost three times their debt and face much more swingeing repayment terms. Arsenal incurred their debts in order to increase their revenue by building a larger stadium – so, in the eyes of lenders, they are creating a tangible asset and have therefore been allowed to borrow on relatively favourable terms. In contrast, United incurred their debts for the sole purpose of changing the club's ownership and senior management, a far less tangible way of recouping the money.

Arsenal's repayments for their 14-year loan are around £20m per annum, but managing director Keith Edelman has said they will reschedule their debt repayments on more favourable terms once the new stadium is completed, adding that the plan is to have paid for it by 2030. That should bring repayments down to a more manageable £11m or £12m a year, a figure more than covered by the income from the 22,500 increase in capacity the new stadium offers.

'Credit card' purchase

United, on the other hand, have done the equivalent of buying a house with a credit card rather than a mortgage. While J P Morgan agreed to lend the Glazers £270m to part-finance their purchase of the club, it did so at a hefty interest rate and wants its money back by 2012. Meanwhile, £265m was provided by three hedge funds at rates in excess of 15 per cent per year. Unlike Arsenal, United are unable to reschedule these debt repayments in the short term as the hedge funds have imposed large penalties if the loans are paid off before 2007. The repayments due next year are expected to be around £50m, rising to £80m in 2008.

Considering United made a pre-tax profit of £27m last year, when they enjoyed Champions League football, it is hard to see where a shortfall of around £40m will be found – even more if they don't make it into the Champions League – unless of course the wage bill is cut significantly.

When financial institutions lend large amounts to businesses they carry out "due diligence", whereby they assess the borrower's ability to repay. Arsenal were able to present a sound business case that did not depend on Champions League football every season. United, however, had to approach "lenders of last resort" and appeared to have based their ability to repay on the assumption that Champions League football was a given – something the other contenders will dispute until the final day of the season.

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Food for thought…the power of FIFA's Blatter and UEFA's Johansson is on the wane

Falling apart

Football's 100-year pyramid structure is being threatened by uncontrollable economic factors

WHO RUNS FOOTBALL in Europe? The answer may soon be nobody. FIFA thinks it commands overall direction, UEFA believes it has its finger on the competitive income, the national associations reckon their network provides the glue, the clubs claim to control the basic wealth, and leading players and their agents play off one against the other and exploit the gaps in between. Now, aiming to plug those gaps, please welcome the EU.

Farce? You bet. But it's not so funny if you love the game and want to see it prosper in the 21st century. The nub of the problem is that football is ill-equipped to handle its own phenomenal success. FIFA and UEFA are administrative bodies that cover their legal limitations with disciplinary codes, which stand only through consensus. Now this consensus is falling apart.

Sepp Blatter and Lennart Johansson, the respective presidents, are more worried than they may appear as they bestride the red carpets rolled obsequiously out at committee meetings, commissions and international conferences. They hang on firmly to their power, but that is waning under commercial and competitive pressure. Since Europe funds more than 90 per cent of international football, the seismic ripples from the rumblings beneath Zurich and Nyon will shake the game from Santiago, Lima and Bogota in the west to Tokyo, Beijing and Seoul in the east.

Players' wages, agent interference, transfer market instability, doping, match-fixing, high ticket prices, the imbalance of intra-European wealth plus TV over-exposure are all matters of detail.

For the best part of a century football's recreational status was well served by the pyramid of power: FIFA at the top, then the national associations, the leagues, the clubs and the players.

No more. The pyramid is being shaken from the bottom. Blaming the greed of the clubs is naive. Society is changing, and football's structures must expand and contract to cope.

Compensation logic

The G-14 grouping of top European clubs is far too exclusive for its own good but, in pursuing a compensation system for national team selection in major tournaments, it has logic firmly on its side – and several federations, such as the Dutch and the German, have already conceded the point.

FIFPro, the global organisation for professional players, gained its right to a place at the bargaining table through the hard work of Gordon Taylor, chief executive of the English players' union. Now he has handed over the FIFPro reins to Philippe Piat. The Frenchman duly emerged from a meeting with G-14 in Milan to state: "After more than 100 years, employers and employees in international football have had their first dialogue."

Also shaking the foundations are Belgian club Charleroi, with the formal support of G-14. Charleroi are suing FIFA for some £700,000 compensation for the ligament injury suffered by midfielder Abdelmajid Oulmers while playing for Morocco against Burkina Faso. An initial court date has been set for March.

At the moment the costs raised by a player's injury on international duty are met by his club's insurers. But very soon insurers will tell clubs that such policies are valid only while a player is on club duty. Then, who dare play for a national team?

Bolton manager Sam Allardyce has suggested that FIFA itself should raise a worldwide player insurance policy. The idea is almost too obvious but it makes sense: it would protect national associations, clubs and players and would not "cost" poorer associations from the Third World.

Straws are floating in the wind. Markus Siegler, FIFA's director of communications, shared a discussion platform at Soccerex, the football business convention, with Milan's sporting director, Umberto Gandini. Both spoke up for the party line, which was neither here nor there. The significance was that Siegler was authorised by Blatter to engage in public discussion at all. That tells a tale of concern at the highest levels, which is long overdue and comes, maybe, just in the nick of time. But a lot more talking – and listening – is needed to avert anarchy.

Platini's technical hitch

THAT OLD LUDDITE Michel Platini has been at it again – grinning with delight at the latest rebuff to the French federation in its modest bid to experiment with video assistance for referees.

Platini, former France captain, manager and World Cup organiser turned FIFA and UEFA committee man, believes the game should be left untrammelled by modern contraptions, saying the essence of football is in its unpredictable humanity.

Thus, French League president Frederic Thiriez, who was not even suggesting the video referee should operate in a competitive game, was forced into a hurried climbdown once FIFA got wind of his plan to run a series of private experiments. Thiriez does appear to have gained acquiescence for the issue to be discussed early next year by the International Board at its annual meeting. But a chasm of time exists between discussion and law book.

I wonder if it has struck Platini that a video ref would surely have ordered the expulsion of Toni Schumacher for the unpunished assault that laid out Patrick Battiston in that dramatic World Cup semi-final in Seville in 1982.

West Germany, with all 11 men still on the pitch, battled back from 3-1 down in extra-time to draw 3-3 and then win on penalties. Platini, of course, was playing for France that day.

Cause for concern…Platini consoles Battiston as he is carried off during the 1982 World Cup semi-final

Forgotten heroes deserve better

HOW SOON FOOTBALL forgets. Not only Ferenc Puskas, as I mentioned recently, but Garrincha, too.

While the "Little Bird" with the twisted legs was winning World Cups for Brazil in 1958 and 1962 it was well known that he had seven daughters. Later came the revelation that he had a son, too – born in Sweden in 1962, some nine months after Garrincha and Botafogo had passed through on tour.

Ulf Lindberg never met his father. He is now 43 and has a son of his own with whom he has just visited Brazil for the first time. The pair were saddened to find the grave of Manoel Francisco dos Santos in his home town of Pau Grande overgrown and abandoned.

Football forgets at its –and its heroes' – peril. In Hungary, it now appears that the organisers of that notorious pre-season friendly against Real Madrid have "found" £56,000 in the accounts to put towards to the hospital care of Puskas, the country's greatest footballer. His football memorabilia – sent for auction by wife Erszebet – has been bought for a museum in Budapest, raising extra funds.

Sad reminder…Garrincha

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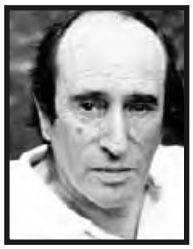

Brian Glanville on former Arsenal trainer and manager Tom Whittaker

Magic and intrigue

Team talk…Whittaker (centre) at Arsenal in 1948

YES, I HAD remembered correctly. There really is, in *Cliff Bastin Remembers*, the first book I ever wrote, or ghosted, a chapter entitled "The Greatness of Tom Whittaker". In it, Bastin, Arsenal's then record scorer, says: "During the course of my football career I met hundreds of personalities from all walks of life…For none of them did I have greater respect than for Tom Whittaker."

Bastin described how Whittaker, the Arsenal trainer with the "magic hands", would perform small miracles to get him fit for a game when it seemed physically impossible.

Whittaker's story was romantic. In the summer of 1925, when a left-half of modest talent with Arsenal, he had returned from an FA tour of Australia with a badly injured knee. By chance, he met a woman on the liner sailing home who told him of "the one person" who could cure him, a Liverpool surgeon called Sir Robert Jones.

Herbert Chapman, who had just begun his reign as Arsenal manager, agreed to send Whittaker to Jones, who indeed got him walking again, though he could no longer play. Chapman, with astonishing acumen, told Whittaker he would make him "the greatest trainer in the world" – and did.

When Chapman died in March 1934, Whittaker's role at Highbury became still more important. The new manager was George Allison, a reporter with a long-standing Arsenal connection but whose football background was scant and whose rapport with the players was uneasy. Whittaker thus became the "good father" below stairs, maintaining the Chapman tradition and holding things together.

Whittaker had written the foreword to Bastin's book, and in 1951, the year after it was published, I asked him what he had thought of it. To my surprise, he told me he had never seen the book. When I told the publishers of this, they insisted they'd given Bastin copies to take to Whittaker. They wrote angrily to Bastin, who angrily replied that I shouldn't tell such tales; he'd given the books to Whittaker himself. I in turn wrote to Bastin saying I accepted what he said but that I'd merely passed on what Whittaker had told me. Bastin wrote to me to say he understood my unwitting involvement, adding: "But in future, watch your step at Highbury." It was my first intimation that Whittaker was not quite the paragon I'd imagined.

Whittaker had succeeded Allison as Arsenal manager in 1947 and led them to the League title in his first season in charge and the FA Cup in 1950. But things began to go wrong, prompting Harry Homer, the programme editor, to tell the manager: "What you need is a Tom Whittaker!"

Fast forward to 1969. Bob Wall, who had inched his way up from Chapman's office boy to chief executive, published a book called *Arsenal From The Heart*. In it, he accused former left-back Eddie Hapgood and right-half Jack Crayston of demanding benefit payments at the end of the war. Arsenal, Wall pursued, being hard up then, asked if they could defer payment, but the players appealed to the Football League – and were turned down. When finally offered the money, they in turn refused it.

'After Herbert Chapman died, Whittaker became the "good father" at Arsenal'

By chance, I was due to interview Hapgood and he was shocked when I told him of Wall's book. He produced letters which showed that, after being sacked as Bath City boss, he'd written to Arsenal asking for help, pointing out he had never received a benefit. They sent him £30!

I then consulted the Football League, who told me they had no record of any such appeal. I put this to Wall and asked him where the story, angrily denied by Hapgood, had originated. The astonishing answer was "Tom Whittaker".

I asked if I could see the club's minutes of the time. "I don't think the chairman would like that," countered Wall. "But you can write whatever you like, Brian, and Arsenal will not reply."

I did, and they didn't.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

APRIL 1995

NICHOLAS HARLING REPORTED ON THE LEGAL STEPS BEING TAKEN BY ONE JEAN-MARC BOSMAN

AS IF Racing Club Liege aren't already in enough trouble. Facing debts of £5million, relegation and unable to use their own Rocourt stadium, the club are now threatened by legal action from former player Jean-Marc Bosman.

The Belgian FA and UEFA are also being challenged by the 30-year-old, who has taken his case to the European Court of Justice, claiming damages of £300,000 for restraint of trade.

He alleges "his right to free circulation as a worker within the European Community was being prejudiced". Should he succeed, Bosman could put a stop to all clubs profiting from transfers.

Bosman's crusade began in 1990 when Liege offered him a new contract at a fraction of his existing salary. His desire to leave was not helped by the Belgian FA's complex player evaluation scale, which enabled Liege to ask four times what they paid for him. A proposed move to French Second Division club Dunkerque fell through because of a dispute over pay. Bosman's subsequent visit to a lawyer was followed by success in his case at the local Palais de Justice.

As he was now free to leave Liege, Bosman sought refuge with another French Second Division side, Saint Quentin, but he was not a popular figure there and was soon forced further afield, to the Indian Ocean island of Reunion. His marriage collapsed while his battle for damages from Liege raged on. But it may soon be over.

10 Argentinians and a Colombian

The Villarreal and Argentina playmaker selects his best XI

I WOULD PROBABLY put Colombian **Oscar Cordoba** in goal, because I played with him at Boca Juniors and he always was really solid, making very few errors.

The same can be said about right-back **Hugo Ibarra**, who just seems to get better and better as time goes by. He was one of our key players when Boca won the Libertadores Cup. He's got great spirit, he never gives in. At left-back I would pick **Diego Placente**. He's always cool when he's got the ball, and though he doesn't play spectacularly, he almost never makes a mistake.

In central defence I'd put my friend **Fabricio Coloccini**, an amazing player. We played together in the Argentina side that won the 1997 World Youth Cup under the current national boss, Jose Pekerman. Fabricio is one of the best defenders in the Spanish League.

Next to him I'd have **Walter Samuel**. He's strong, tenacious and brilliant at snuffing out danger. His nickname is "The Wall", which is just about the best nickname you can get as a defender.

Fernando Redondo would be the heart of my team. I like the sheer quality of his game, especially his passing, which is maybe the best I have ever seen. He was able to cover the entire pitch without running, just because of his tactical strength and organisational skills.

Pablo Aimar would be my playmaker. What a talent! He's really elegant and he always has some trick up his sleeve. Everybody will see at the 2006 World Cup what an amazing player he is.

Then there's **me**, of course!

Regarding forwards, I'd probably put **Gabriel Batistuta** and **Claudio Caniggia** as a partnership because it was really beautiful to see them playing together. Batistuta was the best striker in the 1990s, no doubt. He scored goals like no other player.

Caniggia would hardly get noticed in some games, but he had so many spectacular moments. I will never forget his goal against Brazil in the 1990 World Cup.

I only need one more player and that would obviously be **Diego Maradona**. What he did at the 1986 World Cup had never been done before and nobody will come even close to doing it again. In those few weeks he was better than everybody that had been before him, and better than everybody who has followed him.

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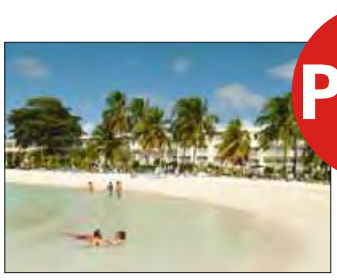

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Here's one we made earlier

CLUB WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

The tournament cancelled by FIFA in 2003 for financial reasons is back

THIRD TIME LUCKY? That is the fervent hope within FIFA on the relaunch of its accident-prone Club World Championship, which will run from December 11 to 18.

The signs are not promising. The usual trumpeting of multi-million-dollar television deals, FIFA's preferred tactic for talking up big events, has been conspicuous by its absence.

In 1993 the world governing body, seeing the eruption of the UEFA Champions League as an international licence to print money, decided to cream off some of the profit with a first venture into club football tournaments.

Brazil hosted the first edition in 2000. Manchester United caused controversy by opting out of their FA Cup defence in service of the FA's bid to host the 2006 World Cup. It was felt that not attending a FIFA event would be detrimental to the cause, but their turning up proved doubly in vain – the World Cup was awarded to Germany and United went out in the first round. Corinthians beat Vasco da Gama in the Final.

A second CWC, scheduled for Spain in 2003, was cancelled for financial reasons.

The reason for persevering with the competition was the long-term Asian and African irritation at being shut out of the Intercontinental Club Cup, also known as the World Club Cup, which had been staged between the European and South American club champions since 1960. Thus FIFA, at a stroke, satisfied its lust for power while garnering further developing world support.

Outnumbered in the corridors of power, Europe and South America reluctantly allowed the CWC to swallow up the World Club Cup (CONMEBOL, the South American confederation, wants to resurrect it for an annual meeting of the Sudamericana Cup and UEFA Cup winners, the two regions' second-string club events).

The price for Europe and South America was guaranteeing their clubs byes into the semi-finals. How it works – whether it works – is almost more intriguing than who wins.

Keir Radnedge

Action arena…the International stadium in Yokohama will stage the Final

TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

QUARTER-FINALS	
Dec 11	
Al Ittihad (Sau) v Al Ahly (Egy)	Tokyo
Dec 12	
Sydney FC (Aus) v Saprissa (CR)	Toyota
SEMI-FINALS	
Dec 14	
Al Ittihad or Al Ahly v Sao Paulo (Bra)	Tokyo
Dec 15	
Sydney FC or Saprissa v Liverpool (Eng)	Yokohama
FIFTH-PLACE PLAY-OFF	
Dec 16	
Losing quarter-finalists	Tokyo
THIRD-PLACE PLAY-OFF	
Dec 18	
Losing semi-finalists	Yokohama
FINAL	
Dec 18	Yokohama

THE TEAMS	HOW THEY QUALIFIED	MAIN MEN	THE COACH	HOW SERIOUSLY ARE THEY TAKING THE TOURNAMENT?	TALKING POINT
AL AHLY EGYPT	By winning the 2005 African Champions League. They beat Etoile Sahel of Tunisia 3-0 on aggregate in the Final to win the crown for the third time.	Mohamed Barakat has been the star performer all season, with his endless running down the right; Gilberto on the left; striker Mohamed Aboutraika; Ahmed El-Sayed is a stalwart in defence.	Portuguese Manuel Jose is in his second spell with the club, who were unbeaten in 52 matches after their Champions League triumph. He previously coached Benfica, Boavista, Uniao Leiria and Belenenses.	They had Japan in their sights throughout the Champions League campaign and were determined to qualify, but now say they are going there with nothing to lose and without the normal overwhelming pressure from their millions of fans.	Arguably the best club side to come out of Africa in the past decade, Al Ahly's all-out attacking style is a delight to watch. They have a quiet confidence about them and might just make it through to the Final.
AL ITTIHAD SAUDI ARABIA	By winning the 2005 Asian Champions League. They beat 2003 champions Al Ain of the UAE 5-3 on aggregate in the Final to retain the continental crown.	Mohamed Kallon – six goals in six Champions League games since moving on loan from Monaco; Saudi international Mohammed Noor, who has developed into one of Asia's finest midfielders; the powerful Ahmed Dukhi, who prowls along the right flank.	Romania's Anghel Iordanescu has succeeded at continental level for a second time in Asia, five years after winning the now defunct Asian Club Championship with Al Hilal, also of Saudi Arabia.	The desire to participate in the CWC has burned strong within many Asian teams since the announcement was made to resurrect the tournament, and Al Ittihad are no different. They have gone about assembling a squad unsurpassed in Asia, with the intention of proudly flying the Saudi flag on the global stage.	No sooner had Al Ittihad qualified for the CWC than the speculation started over which big-name foreign player the club would try to bring in ahead of the tournament. Rivaldo is among those linked with a one-month loan deal.
LIVERPOOL ENGLAND	By winning last season's dramatic UEFA Champions League Final in Istanbul, when they came from 3-0 down at half-time against Milan to draw 3-3 then triumph in the shoot-out.	Steven Gerrard, the inspirational captain who turned down Chelsea in the summer to stay with his hometown club; Peter Crouch, ungainly-looking striker who has yet to score for his new club; Jamie Carragher, locally-born defender who has excelled at centre-back.	Spaniard Rafael Benitez, who made his name at Valencia and has continued his reputation for innovative tactical thinking at Anfield.	Not their No 1 priority. Although qualification for the knockout stages of the Champions League looks a certainty, they play Chelsea on December 6 – nine days before their first CWC match – in a game likely to decide which of them wins the group. When they return from Japan, they face the usual Christmas excesses of four games in eight days.	Liverpool continue to make progress under Benitez in Europe. But a number of recent signings have proved ill-equipped to deal with the intensity and rigours of the Premier League.
SAO PAULO BRAZIL	By winning the 2005 Libertadores Cup. They beat fellow Brazilians Atletico Paranaense 5-1 on aggregate in the Final.	Goalscoring goalkeeper Rogerio Ceni, deadly from free-kicks; no-nonsense Uruguayan stopper Diego Lugano; flying right-back Cicinho; elegant left-footed midfielder Danilo; and the powerful, experienced forward partnership of Amoroso and Christian.	Paulo Autuori, who took over earlier this year after a stormy time in charge of Peru. The Libertadores win with Sao Paulo was his second – the first came nine years ago with Cruzeiro.	Very seriously indeed. After winning the Libertadores their domestic form slumped, but as soon as they had avoided relegation all thoughts turned to Japan, scene of their early 1990s victories against Milan and Barcelona in the old World Club Cup. Another triumph would eclipse the victory of city rivals Corinthians in the first CWC in 2000.	Sao Paulo are one of the best structured Brazilian clubs, but that does not grant them immunity from the general rule of South American football – success is hard to sustain because it attracts the European clubs, who siphon off the best players. Cicinho joins Real Madrid in January and Lugano could soon be on the move.
SAPRISSA COSTA RICA	By winning the 2005 CONCACAF Champions Cup. Their 3-2 aggregate defeat of Mexico's Pumas UNAM in the Final was their third continental title success, after 1993 and 1995.	National team attacker Ronald Gomez, a key figure at the 2002 World Cup and during the Germany 2006 qualifying campaign; creative midfielder Walter Centeno; national team defender Reynaldo Parks.	Hernan Medford, a veteran of both Costa Rica's 1990 and 2002 World Cup campaigns. He is a hero in Costa Rica for scoring the winner against Sweden at Italia 90.	After claiming the scalps of a number of Mexican and American sides in continental competition – Pumas, Pachuca, Chicago Fire and Kansas City Wizards – Saprissa will fancy their chances of overcoming Sydney in their quarter-final in Toyota. But if they do, Liverpool, their semi-final opponents, will be an entirely different proposition.	The club are named after their founder, the famed Costa Rican sportsman Ricardo Saprissa, and nicknamed the "Purple Monster" after their kit. They are owned by Mexican businessman Jorge Vergara, who also owns Mexican side Guadalajara and Major League Soccer franchise Chivas USA.
SYDNEY FC AUSTRALIA	By winning the 2005 Oceania Club Championship. They beat Magenta of New Caledonia 2-0 in the Final.	Former Man United striker Dwight Yorke; Kazuyoshi Miura, the veteran former Japan forward, signed on a short-term deal for the CWC; ex-Leicester and Wolves midfielder Steve Corica; Australian international David Zdrilic.	Pierre Littbarski, the former West Germany midfielder, who has ex-Norwich and Tottenham player Ian Crook as his assistant.	The trip to Japan will be the first major test for this new club. The short-term signing of Miura, now 38, will give Sydney a boost from increased Japanese support, but it also suggests that the club are more concerned about the marketing side than the footballing one.	Sydney FC were formed as recently as November 1 last year when they were confirmed as the New South Wales capital's franchise in the new Australian A League. Earlier this year, they won a round-robin tournament of A League clubs to determine Australia's representatives in the Oceania Club Championship.

Eastern coaches in demand

GERMANY

Doll's house…the coach has brought the smiles back to Hamburg

WHO SAID EAST GERMAN football was on its deathbed? Ironically, at a time when there is no club from the old DDR in the top flight, coaches from eastern Germany continue to be held in high esteem in the Bundesliga.

Veteran ex-Borussia Monchengladbach boss Hans Meyer was recently appointed at struggling Nurnberg, one-time defector Falko Gotz has turned Hertha Berlin into top-six material, while former DDR and Germany winger Thomas Doll has been working wonders at Hamburg for the past year.

The northerners were in a terrible state when Doll stepped up from his duties with the youth team to replace the sacked Klaus Toppmoller as head coach in October 2004 – rock bottom of the Bundesliga and disunited both on the pitch and in the dressing-room. But all that was to change dramatically once the eternally upbeat "Dolly" had taken the helm. Team unity and purpose swiftly came flooding back and an eighth-place finish last season was richly deserved.

This term, results have been better still. Hamburg stood third in the table after 12 games, which have included home wins over leaders Bayern Munich (2-0) and last term's runners-up Schalke (1-0), while they have also qualified for the UEFA Cup via the InterToto. New Dutch playmaker Rafael Van der Vaart wasted no time putting his creative and goalscoring imprint on the team, and a teak-tough rearguard starring the Belgian-Dutch central defensive pairing of skipper Daniel Van Buyten and Khalid Boulahrouz had conceded only six League goals, the lowest in the division.

Doll prefers a 4-4-2 with a midfield diamond, but the secret of his success is not his tactics. Much more important is the lightness of touch of his man-management style. The coach, who is never one to be cowed by pressure and has a smile permanently etched on his face, has managed to infuse his charges with his own enthusiasm and fearlessness.

"It's not only the quality of players we have here that makes me believe we can soon reach the Champions League," says Van Buyten. "The character and togetherness of the squad is also exceptional. No one complains when they have to sit on the bench. That shows what a good bunch of guys we have and the great atmosphere at the club."

One problem Hamburg will have to address if they intend to stay in the upper reaches of the table is their over-reliance for goals on Van der Vaart and Bosnian forward Sergej Barbarez. Off-colour strikers Benny Lauth and Belgian Emile Mpenza are fast using up the management's patience, and reinforcements may arrive in the January transfer window.

No go Matthaus

Over at bottom side Nurnberg, Meyer was by no means the first choice to step into the void after Wolfgang Wolf had been axed. The club initially tipped off the press that they were negotiating to bring in former national team captain and current Hungary boss Lothar Matthaus, who hails from the region. But if Nurnberg president Michael A Roth assumed the fans would congratulate him, he had badly miscalculated.

Matthaus was the last person the supporters wanted – remembering only too well how he had often been less than complimentary about their club – and immediately assailed the board with protests. Fan power prevailed and Roth promptly abandoned the idea, though Matthaus, wilful as ever, insisted it was he who ended the talks. Nurnberg then turned to ex-Bochum coach Peter Neururer, but he was not interested. Only then did Meyer come into the frame. Incidentally, Neururer is now leading Hannover, having taken over from the sacked Ewald Lienen.

The second round of the German Cup featured a pair of major shocks, Eintracht Frankfurt thumping Champions League participants Schalke 6-0 and Second Division Hansa Rostock eliminating chronically inconsistent Stuttgart 3-2 – just one more problem for coach Giovanni Trapattoni.

The main event of the third round in December will be the Bayern Munich-Hamburg clash at the Allianz Arena. Expect fireworks.

Gladbach's international wing-back Christian Ziege has been forced to retire after failing to find a cure for the ankle trouble that has plagued him for the best part of two seasons.

Nick Bidwell

Down and maybe out…a poor display against Costa Rica means Barthez may give way to Coupet in Germany

More questions than answers

FRANCE

ON THE SURFACE it all looks rosy for the national side. Undefeated throughout 2005 and safely through to the World Cup finals, *Les Bleus* will arrive in Germany with many expecting the 1998 winners to make a serious bid for the title. But it is likely that most of those expecting big things will not be French. Most local observers feel that 2005 has thrown up a lot more questions than it's answered. And nobody is convinced that the national team are anywhere near the finished article.

The problems were all too apparent in France's last two friendly matches of the year, against Costa Rica and Germany. The squad travelled to the Caribbean island of Martinique, a French *departement*, for a meeting with the South American side "to pay homage to a region that has given a lot to our game", as *France Football* put it, as well as to raise money for the families of the 150 Martinique victims of a Venezuelan air crash on August 16. But even when accepting that the game was merely a friendly, France's performance in their 3-2 win again raised doubts about the ability of coach Raymond Domenech to mould his talented group of players into a cohesive unit. The fact that they had had to come from 2-0 down to win with a very late goal hardly improved confidence.

A tepid 0-0 draw against Germany at the Stade de France three days later, during which the visitors performed with much more purpose and will feel aggrieved not to have won, will have left fans of *Les Bleus* still scratching their heads.

The feeling in France as the team look towards 2006 and the next match – a March 1 meeting with Slovakia in Paris – is that three major issues need to be resolved, and quickly. The first is exactly how they can be relied on to impose themselves when their talisman, Zinedine Zidane, recovering from injury in Madrid, is unavailable. The second is what is the best striking combination from what, on paper, looks like an embarrassment of riches, further strengthened by the international return of Fenerbahce's Nicolas Anelka after three and a half years in the wilderness. The third is who should be Domenech's first-choice keeper – Marseille's Fabien Barthez or Lyon's Gregory Coupet.

While the coach insists he won't be rushed into making any decisions, most observers believe that the answer to the third of these questions was decided in the two recent friendlies. Barthez made a horrible individual error for the second Costa Rican goal in Fort-de-France, while Coupet proved himself "decisive at every important moment" against Germany, according to *L'Equipe*. It makes you wonder just how much more consistent Coupet has to be to get a public endorsement, though the smart money says Domenech has now made his mind up that the Lyon man should get the nod.

Impressive Anelka

The issue of strikers is much more tricky. With Juventus star David Trezeguet unavailable for the Costa Rica game, Anelka made the most of his chance with a sharp first goal and a good all-round performance. He then impressed again against Germany after replacing Henry at half-time, while Trezeguet was unconvincing and was himself replaced by Liverpool's Djibril Cisse. Clearly, Henry is a shoo-in for one of the forward berths at the World Cup, but who will partner him from Anelka, Trezeguet, Cisse, Sylvain Wiltord and Sidney Govou is anybody's guess.

As for Zidane, it was only his unexpected and much-heralded return to international action after self-imposed exile back in August that gave the sluggish France team the necessary impetus to push on to World Cup qualification. But Zizou is not getting any younger, and Domenech is short of replacements who can take a game by the scruff of the neck and really create from an attacking midfield position when times are tough. PSG's Vikash Dhorasoo is too slight and his club-mate Jerome Rothen too inconsistent, which puts the onus on Lyon's Florent Malouda, an undoubtedly talented player who has the ability to be a major figure in Germany next year. The trouble is, it is still all about Malouda's potential at the minute, rather than any certain knowledge that he will deliver when he needs to.

The same could be said of the entire France team right now. It is all down to Domenech, who has just been confirmed in his job until July 10, 2006 – the day after the World Cup Final – to find the right formula to mould a formidable group of individuals into a formidable team.

Howard Johnson

Top finish…Timmy Simons sends Maarten Stekelenburg the wrong way from the spot for the controversial winner against Ajax that put PSV in pole position

Hiddink on high

HOLLAND

PSV COACH GUUS HIDDINK has defied the critics by steering his team to the top of both the domestic table and their Champions League group.

PSV did the Double last term and reached the Champions League semi-finals, but the departure of six key players, including Mark Van Bommel and Park Ji-sung, over the summer suggested a repeat was out of the question. But the solid backbone of keeper Heurelho Gomes, centre-back Alex and midfielder Phillip Cocu remains, while Timmy Simons has proved a valuable addition to the engine room. Meanwhile, Jefferson Farfan and Arouna Kone, who isn't eligible for the Champions League, are making the difference up front, and Hiddink also has two more-than-capable teenage midfielders to call on in Ibrahim Afellay and Ismail Aissati.

PSV went top in Holland after beating Ajax 1-0 in Eindhoven. In the Champions League, they held Milan 0-0 away, then beat them 1-0 at home.

The victory over Ajax came from a controversial penalty, earned by a clear Farfan dive in the box and converted by Simons. But there is more than bad luck running against the Amsterdammers. The team have a distinct lack of firepower, and they have lost all their key matches to date this season – against domestic title rivals PSV, Feyenoord and AZ and Champions League opponents Arsenal. Coach Danny Blind must also shoulder some of the blame for his constant line-up changes, while midfielder Steven Pienaar and striker Ryan Babel are struggling out of position on the wings.

Ajax's defeat by PSV was followed by a 0-0 draw at home to Heerenveen and a 1-0 reverse at NEC to fall 13 points behind the leaders. Off the field, directors Hein Blocks and Klaas Nuninga have quit because of rows with new chairman John Jaakke.

AZ midfielder Barry Van Galen has been ordered to do 60 hours' community service for his part in a fight at a fair. The team also dropped points when Heracles snatched a draw in injury-time thanks to a header from goalkeeper Martin Pieckenhagen.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

SWITZERLAND

Fifty unbeaten for Basle

Champions Basle extended their unbeaten home record to 50 games when beating St Gallen 1-0 to stay six points clear in the League. They also hammered Second Division Old Boys, their city rivals, 6-1 to reach the last 16 of the Cup.

Thun also had a convincing Cup win, 7-1 against Second Division Perly-Certoux, but it was about the only thing that went right for them in the past month. They were thrashed 6-1 at home by Zurich and then lost 2-0 at Grasshopper in the League, while they also suffered a traumatic home defeat by Ajax in the Champions League. The Amsterdammers scored twice in injury-time to win 4-2 and all but end Thun's hopes of reaching the last 16.

There were some upsets in the domestic Cup, with Grasshopper, Neuchatel Xamax, St Gallen and Yverdon all going out to lower league opposition.

Hans-Peter Zaugg became the third coaching casualty in the top flight this season when fired by Young Boys after a 1-0 defeat at Aarau left the team mired in mid-table. His replacement is German Gernot Rohr, formerly coach of Bordeaux and Nice and most recently technical director at Eintracht Frankfurt.

Ivar von Rulach

AUSTRIA

Admira whacked

Admira Wacker may be in their centenary year, but they have little to celebrate given their woeful League showing this season. They lost 14 of their first 18 games to lie bottom, 12 points adrift of Wacker Tirol.

It is a far cry from the optimism of the summer, when Iranian millionaire Majid Pishyar took over the club and

invested a large sum into the transfer kitty with the idea of bringing Admira League title success. However, although no fewer than 15 players were signed up, most are ageing Austrians with their best days behind them and who have spectacularly failed to cut the mustard.

But the rot had set in long before the transfer spree. Admira, originally from the southern outskirts of Vienna, enjoyed solid support and became one of the country's most successful clubs, winning nine championships and six Cups. However, with crowds dwindling because of the draw of bigger Viennese sides, they merged with Modling in the mid-1990s and moved to the small town of that name 10 miles from the capital. They thus lost all their traditional ties and with them their status as one of the country's top clubs.

Now, Pishyar's dreams of creating a second "Theatre of Dreams" have turned into a nightmare, with the average crowd at the run-down Suedstadt stadium less than 3,000. There have also been ructions in the boardroom over the club's plight. Sporting director Manfred Polster quit after the board rejected his demands for the sacking of coach Robert Pflug. Meanwhile, Pishyar has received death threats, making police protection necessary at a recent home game, and he has ordered club manager Hans-Werner Weiss to shut down the online supporters forum "to avoid unnecessary negative propaganda".

Harry Miltner

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Cork eye Double

League leaders Cork City stayed on course for the Double when beating championship challengers Derry City 1-0 in the FAI Cup semi-finals. The other finalists are Drogheda United, who overcame Bray Wanderers 2-1.

Sligo Rovers clinched promotion with two games to spare after beating lowly Monaghan 4-0 away.

Sean Creedon

LIECHTENSTEIN

Vaduz strengthen squad

Vaduz, aiming for promotion to the Swiss top division, strengthened their squad shortly before the close of the League transfer deadline by bringing in Brazilian midfielder Henrique Bem from Wil and defender Diren Akdemir from Basle. In the Liechtenstein Cup, Gaspar de Souza hit five goals as Vaduz marched into the semi-finals with a 12-0 thrashing of Balzers.

Graeme Crawford

Put out

BELGIUM

WITH A THIRD of the domestic campaign completed, the sacking season is well and truly under way. Paul Put became the third top-flight coach to be axed this term after Lierse collected only five points from a run of nine games to lie second bottom.

Put's temporary replacements, assistants Eric Van Meir and Patrick Deman, then suffered an ignominious 4-0 defeat at bottom side Germinal Beerschot to sink to the foot of the table. Lierse have now entrusted Dutch coach Rene Trost to preserve their top-flight status. The former assistant at Roda JC was recently in charge of Belgian Fourth Division club Patro.

Germinal's win was Jos Daerden's first since succeeding Marc Brys in October. Nigerian striker Tosin Dosunmu hit a hat-trick in the drubbing.

Gilbert Bodart made an excellent start to his reign at La Louviere, winning his first three games in charge. The ex-Standard Liege keeper succeeded Emilio Ferrera, sacked after the club failed to win any of their first 10 games.

Club Brugge's League crown looks decidedly shaky after a shock 2-1 defeat at promoted Zulte-Waregem left them nine points behind leaders Standard. Anderlecht stayed within two points of the top after beating Charleroi 3-1 at home, their 25th consecutive unbeaten domestic game. In stark contrast, a 3-0 defeat at Liverpool extended the club's record sequence of Champions League losses to 11.

Nicholas Harling

Last throw…Put's tenure at Lierse is over

Grins up north

PORTUGAL

Out of favour…Helder Postiga has been demoted to Porto's B team

THE TRADITIONAL title contenders trailed Sporting Braga after 10 games as the northerners bid to win the championship for the first time. Braga, who finished fourth last season, have built their good early run on a solid defence, which has conceded only two goals.

Sporting Lisbon boss Jose Peseiro was sacked after his side's stuttering start, which included two consecutive League defeats and failure to reach the group stage of either the Champions League or the UEFA Cup. Peseiro's replacement is former Sporting midfielder Paulo Bento, who has only limited coaching experience.

There have been tremors at FC Porto, too, with striker Benni McCarthy's constant transfer requests, coach Co Adriaanse's criticism of Portuguese football, and his demotion of national team forward Helder Postiga to the B team. Adriaanse has given no reason but there is talk of Postiga's influence in the dressing-room undermining the coach's authority.

Benfica got back on track having made their worst League start by winning five games in a row. Nuno Gomes has refound his golden touch, scoring nine goals, already two more than he obtained all last season.

Pedro Pinto

Getting the point…Valerenga's players are ecstatic after the draw with Odd Grenland proves enough to win the title

Valerenga scrape home

NORWAY

HAVING LOST THE championship to Rosenborg last season by the narrowest of margins – number of goals scored – Valerenga finally succeeded in securing the title this time. But once again the race had a dramatic finale.

Start, promoted at the end of the previous season, were leaders on goal difference going into the final game at home to relegation-threatened Fredrikstad and knew they would win the title if they at least matched Valerenga's result. However, Fredrikstad put on a fine battling display to win 3-1, a result that ensured they avoided the drop.

Valerenga, meanwhile, were struggling against Odd Grenland and went behind in the first half. However, goals from Daniel Fredheim Holm and Andre Muri put them 2-1 up, and though Odd equalised, Kjetil Rekdal's side got the point needed to take the title. Henning Berg's Lyn took third place, a point behind Start, while Rosenborg, champions for the past 13 seasons, had to settle for seventh.

Relegated Aalesund and Bodo/Glimt both parted company with their coaches – Ivar Morten Normark and Ola Haldorsen respectively – a few days after the season ended. Former national team defender Erik Hoftun has taken over as Bodo's player/manager.

Meanwhile, Stale Solbakken, another former Norway player, took the reins of Danish League leaders FC Copenhagen having steered Ham-Kam to top-flight survival. Lars Tjarnaas (manager) and Frode Grodaas (head coach) have now taken the reins at Ham-Kam.

Stabaek returned to the top flight after just one season, with much of the credit going to 27-goal top scorer Daniel Nanskog. Sandefjord also won promotion.

Molde beat Lillestrom 4-2 after extra-time in a thrilling Cup Final played on a rain-sodden pitch at Ullevaal. In a ceremony after the game, Start's Tom Nordlie was handed the Coach of the Season award, while Lyon striker John Carew was named Player of the Year.

Sigurd Odegaard

SWEDEN

Double joy for Djurgardens

Djurgardens, who clinched the championship with a game to spare, finished the season in style, hammering Elfsborg 8-1 in their final League match and then securing the Double by beating Atvidaberg 2-0 in the Cup Final.

The outcome was a triumph for Djurgardens coach Kjell Jonevret and his ambitious 4-3-3 tactics. Many pundits had expressed doubts about Jonevret's abilities when he took over last year, but now he is Sweden's hottest coaching property after splendidly revitalising what had seemed a fading team.

Jonevret's main task over the winter will be to keep his team together. He has already lost left-back Fredrik Stenman, who has signed for Bayer Leverkusen.

Much-vaunted Malmo, the 2004 champions, were the big flops of the season, finishing only fifth, 12 points behind Djurgardens. Outgoing coach Tom Prahl is to replace Roy Hodgson at Norwegian side Viking Stavanger.

IFK Gothenburg had to settle for runners-up spot having challenged for the title and now are under scrutiny from the tax authorities. The club are suspected of evading taxes relating to the signing of national team striker Stefan Selakovic from Dutch club Heerenveen. Club director Mats Persson was held for questioning over the issue, and Gothenburg later announced that he had been sacked.

Zlatan Ibrahimovic has been named Sweden's Player of the Year.

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

Duo dethroned

National team coaching duo Asgeir Sigurvinsson and Logi Olafsson have been told their services are no longer required following Iceland's poor showing in the World Cup qualifiers. The side picked up only four points from 10 games – all from the two meetings with bottom side Malta – and they will go into the Euro 2008 qualifiers only as one of the fifth-seeded nations.

Under-21 coach and former international defender Eyjolfur Sverrisson is the new man at the senior side's helm, on a two-year contract. Under-17 coach Lukas Kostic replaces Sverrisson with the Under-21s.

Rab Christie

ESTONIA

Tarmo fires TVMK to title

Free-scoring TVMK clinched their first championship since 1991 when beating Flora 1-0 in the Tallinn derby in the penultimate round. In total, Vjatcheslav Bulavin's side hit an incredible 138 goals in 36 League games, with Tarmo Neemelo's individual tally of 41 setting a national record. The previous best of 39 was set by Tor Henning Hamre in 2003.

Defending champions Levadia Tallinn had to settle for runners-up spot, Trans Narva were third, while record title winners Flora finished fourth, the first time they had finished outside the top three since 1992.

Trans goalkeeper Sergei Ussoltsev broke the League record set by Mart Poom when remaining unbeaten for 889 minutes.

Andres Must

WALES

Leaders TNS set for name change

Champions Total Network Solutions are leading the way again this season, eight points clear and unbeaten after 10 games. But if they do win the title again they will defend it under a new name next season after owner Mike Harris sold the TNS company to British Telecom. The new name has not yet been decided but will reflect the champions' recent amalgamation with Oswestry Town. Harris will remain as the club's managing director and oversee the development of a new stadium.

Mel Thomas

NORTHERN IRELAND

University sponsors top division

The top division is now officially known as the Carnegie Premier League after the FA signed a three-year sponsorship deal worth £145,000 with Leeds Metropolitan University.

The new name is taken from the LMU's Carnegie faculty of sport and education, whose alumni include former England manager Walter Winterbottom and Olympic 10,000 metres bronze medallist Brendan Foster. It is thought to be the first national football league in the world to have been sponsored by a university.

The deal includes the provision of two places at the university for young players with Irish League clubs.

Republic of Ireland Under-21 full-back Henry McStay scored a remarkable debut goal for Portadown, his wind-assisted clearance bouncing over keeper Michael Doherty and into the Limavady United goal 60 yards away. McStay then scored a second, more orthodox goal later on in his side's 5-1 victory.

Portadown manager Ronnie McFall has been handed a contract extension until the end of 2009. The 56-year-old is already by far the longest-serving Irish League manager with a single club, having taken the reins at Shamrock Park in 1986.

Lowly Larne have replaced manager Jimmy McGeogh with Kenny Shiels, who was dismissed by Ballymena United at the end of last season.

Roy Kitson

Striker problems add to gloom

FINLAND

What have I done?...Eremenko was furious after being left out for the Czech game

FINLAND'S WORLD CUP campaign ended on a sour note, with the team losing their final two qualifiers, at home to Romania and the Czech Republic, and caretaker manager Jyrki Heliskoski having problems with two of his strikers.

Heliskoski withdrew top scorer Alexei Eremenko from the team before the game against the Czechs after he was involved in a road accident a few nights earlier. Eremenko was in the passenger seat when his girlfriend crashed his sports car in the centre of Helsinki. It transpired that she was over the drink-driving limit, and it was only by chance that nobody was hurt.

But Eremenko was furious about his exclusion, saying: "Many footballers have done much worse things, yet they have still been allowed to play." The Lecce midfielder was recalled for the friendly against Estonia, a 2-2 draw.

The decision of Blackburn's Shefki Kuqi to opt out of the last two qualifiers was a lesser irritant for Helsikoski. "At the moment, when my best players are fit, I cannot guarantee Shefki a place in the starting XI," he said. The coach also pointed out Kuqi had not scored in his four most recent matches for Finland.

Sami Hyypia, once again named Finland's Player of the Year, has said he does not want to be involved with the national team for the time being.

Veteran Valery Popovitch scored one goal and created another two as FC Haka beat TPS Turku 4-1 in the Cup Final. RoPS Rovaniemi and TP-47 Tornio were relegated from the Premier League, being replaced by Honka and VPS Vaasa, while Lahti have sacked coach Harri Kampman.

Pentti Hietanen

Leader of the pack...but Olsen's future is unclear

Olsen: will he stay or will he go?

DENMARK

DENMARK'S FAILURE to qualify for the World Cup has led to a protracted debate about the future of national coach Morten Olsen. He was immediately linked with a number of other posts, including Besiktas in Turkey and the Belgian national team, but he also talked with the Danish FA about staying and even expanding his role to encompass being technical director.

The public mood was mixed. There was no clamour for Olsen to depart, yet no great appetite for him to stay either after five years during which the team have reached the 2002 World Cup and Euro 2004 only to be eliminated at the first knockout stage.

The debate also focused on Michael Laudrup, formerly an assistant to Olsen and now coach of Double winners Brondby. Laudrup says he wants to stay in his homeland while his children are still at school. Becoming national team boss would fit that schedule, and the Danish public would happily accept him in the job. Meanwhile, Laudrup has told Brondby he will decide whether to extend his contract at the League's winter break.

One definite appointment is that of Norwegian Stale Solbakken by League leaders FC Copenhagen. He will take charge from January 1 to replace Swede Hans Backe.

Jim Holden

Coaches crash

TURKEY

Just give me time…Jean Tigana faces a media inquisition after taking over the hot seat at Besiktas

A TURKISH CLUB coach's position is always precarious, the trigger liable to be pulled after a couple of bad results or even a seemingly mild dispute with the board. But the start of this season has surpassed all others in terms of coaching carnage, with 11 of the 18 top division bosses biting the dust by the 12th week.

Saban Yildirim, the youngest top-flight coach at 35, lasted just five weeks at Samsunspor after three defeats. He attributes the quick-fire opening to a panic among the traditional top clubs engendered by the unexpected early success of the promoted sides. "When Sivasspor and Kayseri Erciyesspor recorded very good results at the beginning of the season, the other teams were pushed down the League table," Yildirim told the *Hurriyet* newspaper. "The pressure on bosses really increased."

Hurriyet's view was that the sackings stemmed from impatience fuelled by fans' pressure, the lack of long-term vision at many clubs and the vast number of unemployed coaches constantly lobbying for jobs.

This should be food for thought for former Monaco and Fulham coach Jean Tigana, who replaced Riza Calimbay at Besiktas. After the Frenchman's new side lost 3-0 away to Sevilla in the UEFA Cup and could manage only a 1-1 draw at bottom-placed Malatyaspor in the League, fans were already doubting whether he was the right man for the job. "I am a great worker and taskmaster but not a magician," Tigana said. "There will be no miracles."

Calimbay got back on the merry-go-round when chosen to replace the latest victim, Samet Aybaba, at Ankaraspor. Other casualties included former national team coach Senol Gunes at Trabzonspor.

Suna Erdem

GREECE

Support for Super League

The majority of the top-flight clubs have announced their support for the establishment of a Super League, which planners say will ultimately offer a slicker, better organised and higher quality competition.

Xanthi, AEK Athens and Panathinaikos have been the strongest backers, with Apollon, Atromitos, Iraklis, Larissa, Levadiakos, OFI and Panionios also showing support. Alexandros Lykourezos, president of EPAE, the association of professional soccer clubs, and federation chief Vassilis Gagatsis have said they are in favour, too.

Lou Economopoulos

ISRAEL

Cue Kashtan

Dror Kashtan will become national coach next June after seeing out his contract with Hapoel Tel Aviv. The 61-year-old was signed up as the replacement for Avraham Grant, who resigned in October after narrowly failing to lead Israel to the World Cup finals.

Kashtan is the most successful Israeli coach at club level, having won six championships with four different clubs and five Cups. He did the Double with both Maccabi Tel Aviv and Hapoel Tel Aviv, and his counter-attacking style took Hapoel to the 2001 UEFA Cup quarter-finals.

Israel, who were unbeaten in their 10 World Cup qualifying games, finished third in Group 4, just two points behind winners France and on goal difference to Switzerland, who took the play-off slot. But Grant, who had been in charge for four years, was widely criticised for his team's conservative approach.

Hapoel Tel Aviv were fourth after eight games of the League campaign, trailing Maccabi Haifa, who had won all their matches to stay on course for a third straight title.

Hapoel Petach Tikva have

struggled on the field, taking just five points from eight games, while there has been upheaval off it, with owner Ronen Elad firing chairman Gavri Levi and coach Rafi Cohen. Nir Levin has been named as Cohen's replacement.

Ori Lewis

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Blaz holds on

Blaz Sliskovic has held on to his job as national boss despite having now failed three times to lead the team to major tournament finals. The coach received credit for having taken Bosnia to third place in the World Cup qualifying campaign, their highest finish in a preliminary group since independence. There is also a widespread feeling that Sliskovic and the national team can only benefit from the improving quality of the domestic game.

Zdravko Reic

SLOVENIA

Fall in status

The sour end to Slovenia's World Cup qualifying campaign – a 3-0 home defeat by Scotland, which left them only fourth in their group – was followed by news that they will be only among the fourth-seeded countries in the draw for the Euro 2008 preliminaries. Slovenia were among the second seeds in the draw for Euro 2004. But despite the World Cup failure, Branko Oblak has stayed on as national coach.

Zdravko Reic

MACEDONIA

Extended stay for Jovanovski

Champions Rabotnicki Kometal trailed leaders Makedonija by three points after 12 League rounds, but the board showed faith in coach Gjore Jovanovski by handing him a two-year contract extension. Jovanovski's side have not been as convincing as last season because several players have moved abroad.

Former Sloga Jugomagnat and assistant national coach Adnan Zekiri has taken charge of lowly Renova following the resignation of Gani Sejdiu after a series of poor results. Zoran Rosic is another new appointee, taking the reins at struggling Cementarnica after former coach Zanko Savov became a club director.

Michel Stojmanovski

MALTA

Sliema stumble

Sliema Wanderers' excellent early League run came to an abrupt halt when they suffered two consecutive home defeats and lost their championship lead in the process. The League winners for the past three seasons kicked off this term with eight straight victories, but then lost 1-0 to unfancied Pieta Hotspurs and 2-0 to title hopefuls Hibernians. The latter result meant Hibernians leapfrogged Sliema to go top on goal difference.

Domenico Aquilina

CYPRUS

Engel returns

Former Poland coach Jerzy Engel has returned to Cyprus after eight years, to take charge of APOEL. The 53-year-old, recently sacked by Polish champions Wisla Krakow, was coach of Aris Limassol for the first half of 1997 and previously coached three other Cypriot clubs – Apollon Limassol, Paphos and Nea Salamis. Engel succeeds Marios Konstantinou, who was dismissed after APOEL struggled in a number of games.

Olympiakos Nicosia had a different solution to their bad run of form under Rainer Rauffmann, their former star striker – bringing in experienced coach Diethelm Ferner as an adviser. The two Germans must now find a way of pulling Olympiakos up from their lowly ninth position.

Soulis Theodosiou

Crowd ban after trouble

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

THE NATIONAL TEAM have been ordered to play their next competitive home match, a Euro 2008 qualifier, behind closed doors and fined £15,000 because of the crowd trouble during the October World Cup qualifier against Bosnia-Herzegovina in Belgrade. Supporters threw seats and flares at each other, while the home fans displayed banners with inflammatory messages relating to the civil war in the former Yugoslavia.

FA security officer Ljubisav Sekulic is also set to be axed after being blamed by his bosses for failing to control the situation.

Red Star Belgrade showed it is not easy to perform well without home support when losing 2-1 to Basle in a UEFA Cup game ordered to be played behind closed doors because of their fans' repeated misdemeanours. The most recent came in the UEFA Cup qualifier against Croatians Inter Zapresic in August when home fans threw objects at the visitors' dugout and Inter coach Srecko Bogdan was hit by a mobile phone.

Hooliganism in the domestic game claimed its second fatality of the season when an 18-year-old was stabbed in clashes after a Second Division game between Bezanija and Cukaricki. In August, a Vozdovac fan was killed by a Rad supporter while travelling by train to a game in Montenegro.

Partizan Belgrade's crisis has continued, with a 3-2 home defeat by Vozdovac and a Cup humbling by Third Division Timok Zajecar. Furious fans have boycotted games and demanded the heads of the club's management.

Vladimir Novak

Paying penalty…Matias Delgado scores for Basle in an empty Red Star stadium

Opting for Argentina…Daniel Bilos

On the rise

CROATIA

CROATIAN FOOTBALL, already buoyed by the World Cup qualification, received another boost when the country's joint bid with Hungary to stage the 2012 European Championship made it on to UEFA's shortlist of three.

However, national team boss Zlatko Kranjcar has been rebuffed in his attempt to strengthen the squad ahead of the Germany finals. He had hoped to persuade Boca Juniors' Daniel Bilos, an Argentinian with Croatian roots, to come on board but the midfielder appears set to opt to play for his homeland after being named in a recent squad by Argentina coach Jose Pekerman.

Dinamo Zagreb are making the League title race the most one-sided since independence after going 11 points clear of second-placed Rijeka and 17 ahead of rivals and champions Hajduk Split. But their hopes of the Double ended with a shock exit in the last 16 of the Cup, losing 3-2 to Second Division Naftas of Ivanic Grad.

Elvis Scoria resigned as coach of Rijeka – despite their high League position – after three successive League defeats by Pula, Cibalia and Dinamo and following a disagreement with new general manager Miljenko Kovacic. The new coach is 37-year-old Dragan Skocic.

Zdravko Reic

CSKA's title makes trophy hat-trick

RUSSIA

CSKA MOSCOW clinched the League title with a game to spare to make it a hat-trick of trophies in 2005. The UEFA Cup and domestic Cup holders made sure of their second championship since the break-up of the Soviet Union when beating city rivals Dinamo 2-1 away. That kept them four points clear of closest challengers Lokomotiv Moscow, the defending champions, and Spartak Moscow to repeat their title success of 2003.

Coach Valeri Gazzayev and his team celebrated with champagne in the dressing-room after the game and a special toast to Daniel Carvalho would have been in order. The Brazilian attacking midfielder made all the difference, playing a decisive role as creator as well as scoring some of the most important goals of CSKA's campaign.

It has been an amazing turnaround for Carvalho, who spent 2004, his first season at the club, on the bench after being bought for £2.9million from Internacional. Now, CSKA president Evgeni Giner has acknowledged the Brazilian's importance and popularity by vowing that the club will do everything to keep him for next season.

CSKA keeper Igor Akinfeev is the only serious rival to Carvalho in the Player of the Season contest. The 19-year-old not only had a great year with the champions but also secured the No 1 spot with the national team, replacing Lokomotiv's Sergei Ovchinnikov.

Akinfeev and Russia will soon have a new boss following Yuri Semin's decision to step down after just six months at the helm. Semin, who failed to steer Russia even into the World Cup qualifying play-offs, admitted: "I am more of a club coach," and is reportedly set to join Dinamo Moscow.

Victor Gusev

You can't catch us now…CSKA players and staff celebrate winning the Russian championship after the derby victory over Dinamo

CZECH REPUBLIC

Sparta still on slide

Sparta Prague's dismal start to the season has continued, despite the appointment of coach Stanislav Griga to replace Jaroslav Hrebik. A 2-1 League defeat by Jablonec left the champions just three points above the relegation zone, and brought their tally of losses to seven in 12 League rounds. Those defeats included a 4-1 drubbing by city rivals Slavia, their first derby defeat for six years. To make matters worse, Sparta are virtually certain to miss out on the Champions League knockout stages after taking just one point from their first four group games.

Griga, a Slovak, was formerly a Sparta forward and his coaching CV includes Slovan Bratislava, Czech side Slovan Liberec and the Slovak Under-21s. The 43-year-old is now faced with turning round the fortunes of his new team, who are clearly suffering from the absence of three key players: Karel Poborsky is still on loan at Second Division Ceske Budejovice following a dispute with the Sparta management, while Czech Under-21 captain Tomas Sivok and Slovak midfielder Karol Kisel both have long-term injuries.

Sparta have also had off-field problems. They were forced to reduce their capacity for the home Champions League game against Arsenal, a 2-0 defeat, as punishment for racist chanting from their fans during the September tie against Ajax in Prague. The club then turned down their ticket allocation for the return at Highbury, a 3-0 loss, since they were unable to guarantee their fans' good behaviour and thus risked incurring further punishment.

At the third attempt, the FA has elected a new chairman – Moravian businessman Pavel Mokry. The appointment became a formality

when Mokry's main rival, Vlastimil Kostal, agreed to accept the deputy chairman's role. Among Mokry's plans is the construction of a new national stadium in Prague with a capacity of at least 47,000.

Sam Beckwith

POLAND

Engel becomes unlucky 13th

Jerzy Engel has been fired by champions and League leaders Wisla Krakow after only four months in charge because, according to the club, "he could not guarantee an improvement in the team's style of play". The writing was on the wall for the former national team boss after Wisla failed to reach the group stage of the Champions League and then the UEFA Cup.

The team's failure to progress in Europe is a continual frustration to owner Boguslaw Cupial, who has now fired 13 coaches since taking over eight years ago.

Henryk Kasperczak, dismissed by Wisla only last year, had been lined up to return following Engel's departure. However, the negotiations collapsed, and assistant coaches Tomasz Kulawik and Kazimierz Moskal have taken temporary charge.

Engel, who has since joined Cypriot side APOEL, was one of 11 top division coaches to have parted company with their clubs so far this season. All but one have been fired.

The players of Groclin Dyskobolia Grodzisk, last season's League runners-up, made an effort to apologise to their fans for slipping to ninth in the table this term by paying for their tickets for the home game against Polonia Warsaw. More than 5,000 gained free entry, at a cost of £18,600 to the players, but the gesture backfired somewhat as Groclin lost 2-1.

Poland's joint bid with Ukraine to stage the Euro 2012 finals is on a UEFA shortlist of three with Italy and Croatia/Hungary. The final decision will be made in December 2006.

Dariusz Kurowski

HUNGARY

Cheerio, Csaba

Csaba Laszlo was fired by Ferencvaros, the record League title winners, after they made their worst start to a season in living memory. A 2-0 home defeat by promoted Rakospalota was the last straw for the board as the team who finished runners-up last season, Laszlo's first in charge, slumped to 12th place after just two wins from 11 games.

Surprise package Fehervar stayed top, by two points from defending champions Debrecen, after beating MTK 1-0 in a tense game.

National coach Lothar Matthaus has been linked with PAOK Salonika and Nurnberg but may be persuaded to stay on despite Hungary's failure to qualify for the World Cup.

Peterjon Cresswell

BELARUS

Oil's well for Shakhtyor

Shakhtyor Soligorsk have won the League title for the first time, clinching it in style with a 4-0 victory over Torpedo Zhodino. The club, formed in 1961 and backed by the Belarus Oil Company, dominated the entire campaign, finishing 13 points clear of defending champions Dinamo Minsk. Zvezda-BGU and Slavia were relegated, with FC Orsha and Dnepr taking their places.

Oleg Zadernovsky

Dynamo outstrip 'tired' Shakhtar

UKRAINE

SHAKHTAR DONETSK'S European campaign has cost them dearly on the domestic front. The champions lost 1-0 at home to Kyiv Dynamo, handing their arch-rivals the League leadership, three days after an impressive 2-0 win at Stuttgart in the UEFA Cup group stage. Shakhtar also exited the Ukrainian Cup, beaten by Second Division Karpaty Lviv, shortly after defeating PAOK Salonika 1-0 at home in their first UEFA Cup group game.

"Our players were tired after a difficult game against Stuttgart and were unable to stop our strongly-motivated opponents," said Shakhtar's Romanian coach Mircea Lucescu. Serhii Rebrov, who came up through the Shakhtar youth system, scored Dynamo's winner to ensure the capital club went into the winter break on top by a point and unbeaten.

There was further trouble for Shakhtar when Serb defender Nenad Lalatovic, furious at some of the referee's decisions during a reserve game against Zarya, karate-kicked the official. Lalatovic was handed a 12-month ban, which effectively ends his career with the club since his contract expires next July.

Dynamo's Brazilian defender Rodrigo was transfer-listed after kicking team-mate Olexander Aliiev in a row over which of them was to take a free-kick during a reserve game. However, he was reprieved after apologising to Aliiev and the rest of the team.

Eugene Kucherevsky has resigned as coach of Dnipro after a bad run of League results. While the team reached the UEFA Cup group stage, they could not reproduce that form domestically and lay only 10th at the winter break. Kucherevsky, 64, will become sports director at the club with assistant Vadim Tyschenko taking the coaching reins.

Former Metalist coach Olexander Zavarov has taken over at Arsenal Kyiv following the dismissal of Olexander Baranov, while Viacheslav Groznyy has succeeded Anatoliy Yaremchenko at Metalurh Zaporizhya.

Oleg Zadernovsky

Dynamo match-winner…Serhii Rebrov

Back in the fold…Gheorghe Hagi

Hagi takes on Timisoara

ROMANIA

GHEORGHE HAGI has returned to Romanian football as coach of Politehnica Timisoara, four years after quitting as national team boss following failure to reach the World Cup finals in Korea/Japan.

The former Romania hero, who has coached Turkish sides Bursaspor and Galatasaray in the intervening years, has signed a three-year deal at his new club. He succeeds Cosmin Olaroiu, who was fired despite taking Timisoara up to fourth place in the League. President Marian Iancu said that although the team were winning, their style of play was not satisfactory.

Hagi declared his aim was to lead the club to the championship – something they have not achieved since 1938 – then into the Champions League group stage. "My new bosses want to be the best and so do I," said Hagi, set to earn £900,000 over the three years. "My players must have a winner's mentality."

National Bucharest have appointed their third Italian coach in as many years, former Lazio defender Cristiano Bergodi succeeding Roberto Landi, who in turn took over from ex-Italy keeper Walter Zenga. Bergodi, 41, has signed a seven-month deal, with the option of a two-year extension.

Hagi's former Romania team-mate Gheorghe Popescu is to run against incumbent Mircea Sandu in the federation's presidential elections. The former Tottenham, Barcelona and Galatasaray defender has been a player agent for the past 18 months.

Radu Timofte

Heads, I lose…Nicolas Frutos (centre) has been told by his owners he cannot play again until his move to Anderlecht goes through in January

Frutos sidelined after sale

ARGENTINA

INDEPENDIENTE STRIKER and League top scorer Nicolas Frutos has expressed his anger and frustration after being sold to Anderlecht of Belgium in a deal that puts him out of action until January.

Frutos, like many Argentinian players, is not wholly owned by his club, and the business consortium that holds his contract not only decided to sell him mid-season but also ordered that he should not play again until his move to Anderlecht goes through – when the transfer window opens in January – to avoid possible injury.

"This is terrible," said Frutos, whose nine goals in 10 games helped put Independiente among the challengers for the opening championship title. "I've had as many as five owners. You go to a meeting and somebody you don't know says to you: 'Hello, I'm your owner.' You feel as if you don't know whether you are a person or an object, and after they've made their business with your flesh they don't even call to say thank you."

Independiente received only £200,000 compensation for the loss of Frutos for the rest of the opening championship campaign, while the £1.25million transfer fee undervalued the player.

The club, who are in administration with large debts, are facing another ruction over wonderkid Sergio Aguero (see Talent Scout, page 68). The club say they entirely own the 17-year-old, who can expect to command a fee of £12m when his inevitable move to Europe comes to pass, but agents say they own a 25 per cent stake and have the papers to prove it.

The opening title looked to be a two-horse race between Boca Juniors and Velez Sarsfield with five games remaining. Boca held a two-point lead having come away from the big clash at River Plate with a 0-0 draw in what was a poor match.

Bizarrely, Velez did their best to deny themselves a victory by telling the referee of their game at Gimnasia Jujuy that one of their goals should not stand because the ball went in through the side-netting. The official ignored them and Velez won 2-1 to keep up the pressure on Boca. However, the challengers went into the run-in without striker Lucas Castroman, who broke an ankle, and their 10-match unbeaten run ended in a 2-0 home defeat by Estudiantes.

Velez president Raul Gamez, a former member of the club's hooligan gang, has maintained his influence after his favoured successor, Alvaro Balestrini, won the recent election with 70 per cent of the vote. Gamez, who becomes vice-president, was not allowed to run for a third term. He is now in the frame to become Argentinian FA president in 2007.

Eric Weil

COLOMBIA

Kids fill in during Union dispute

Union Magdalena, already certain to be relegated, were forced to field their youth team in their last two closing championship matches after the professionals refused to play claiming they were owed three months' wages. The youngsters performed respectably, losing 3-0 to Pereira and 2-0 to Independiente Medellin, as the club completed their 17-match campaign without a win.

The top eight qualify for the play-offs, and there was a dramatic finish. The biggest upset was the elimination of opening champions Atletico Nacional, who lost to an injury-time goal at home to Atletico Junior. Despite this, Nacional were applauded off the pitch by the 27,000 crowd – a rare happening in South America for a losing team.

Deportivo Cali finished top with 30 points, with the other seven qualifiers – Independiente Medellin, America, Pereira, Atletico Junior, Real Cartagena, Once Caldas and Independiente Santa Fe – all on 29.

Brian Homewood

PERU

Alianza rock bottom

Alianza Lima, considered one of the country's big three clubs, have been rooted to the bottom of the closing championship table after winning only two of their first 15 games. The club are mired in financial difficulties and are already on to their third

coach of the season, the outspoken Roberto Challe.

Brian Homewood

MEXICO

Play-offs take shape

Six of the eight play-off qualifiers were decided with two rounds of the opening championship to go.

America, last season's closing champions, made sure of their place after winning 2-1 away to beleaguered Pumas UNAM and then 1-0 at home to Cruz Azul. The victories came after two consecutive defeats, the first 4-3 at Jaguares, which ended America's 28-match domestic unbeaten run, and the second 2-1 at home to Veracruz.

America were assured of finishing in the top two places in Group 1, with Necaxa certain to take the other automatic qualifying spot. Toluca and Pachuca had ensured their progress in Group 2, as had Cruz Azul and Monterrey in Group 3.

The only issue to be decided was which clubs would fill the two quarter-final berths reserved for the best third-placed sides.

Guadalajara, the country's most popular club, were almost certain to miss out after a dismal campaign under Xavier Azkargorta. The Spaniard, who led Bolivia to the 1994 World Cup and had replaced Benjamin Galindo three matches into the opening championship, managed just one win in 11 outings.

Brian Homewood

CANADA

Toronto's MLS entry sparks war of words

Controversy has flared after the announcement that Toronto was set to receive a franchise to become the first non-US base of Major League Soccer, for the 2007 season.

The city was virtually assured of winning the prize after funding was agreed for the construction of a £30million, 20,000-seat stadium, which would be home to a new professional side that would play in MLS. But while Torontonians were rejoicing, there was gnashing of teeth in Montreal and Vancouver, both of which had announced the building of new stadiums for their existing professional sides.

Their anguish stemmed from a clause in the deal between MLS, the Canadian Soccer Association and Maple Leaf Sports Entertainment – the owners and operators of the new Toronto stadium and club – that guarantees MLS exclusivity to Toronto within Canada for the next three years.

"We seem to be putting far too much emphasis on one MLS team in our country, and that being a cure to our woes at international level," said Bob Lenarduzzi, director of soccer at Vancouver Whitecaps. "I don't believe it's going to work that way."

Montreal Impact president Joey Saputo also aired his doubts, saying: "We're making decisions today without really looking at the full scope of how it's going to affect the game, not only in Montreal and in Vancouver and Toronto, but across the country. We're rushing things too quickly."

But Kevan Pipe, the CSA's chief operating officer, disagreed. "To buy into that argument says that we wait for another five years," he said. "MLSE has many opportunities to move in many other different directions…we cannot continue to wait for other rainbows occurring on other days. The time to move is now."

Philippe Germain

Penarol suffer humiliating loss

URUGUAY

And another one…Danubio celebrate on their way to their 7-2 rout of Penarol

PENAROL SUFFERED THEIR worst defeat against Uruguayan opposition apart from fellow Big Two side Nacional when crashing 7-2 at home to Danubio.

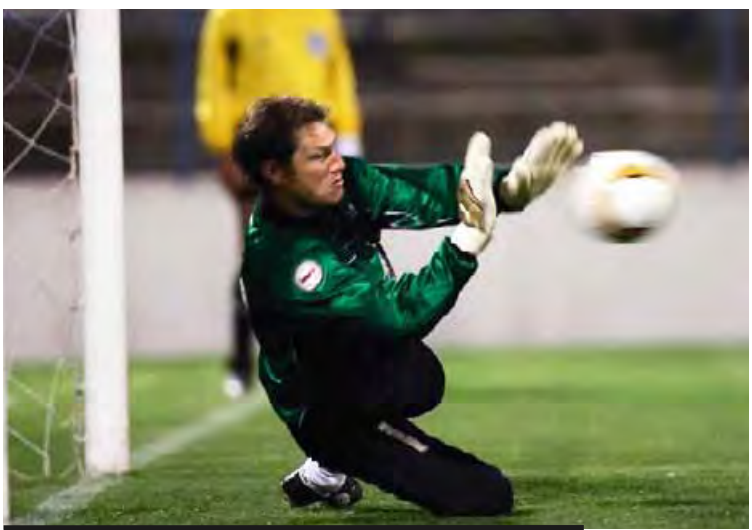
The five-times South American champions went into the match as opening championship leaders and appeared set for another routine win when they raced to a 2-0 lead in seven minutes. But then it all went wrong for the "Manyas". Danubio pulled a goal back after 15 minutes, then Adrian Appellaniz, who scored Penarol's opener, was sent off for a second bookable offence just before the half-hour. Two goals in a minute gave Danubio a 3-2 half-time lead, with another four goals after the break turning it into a rout.

After the match, Penarol's players tried in vain to avoid their furious fans by leaving through a side entrance. At least three players lashed out at supporters before police arrived to escort them to their bus. "What happened was totally inexplicable," said coach Fernando Morena.

Club president Jose Pedro Damiani questioned the behaviour of "five or six players", implying that they did not want to see him stay in power.

Juan Albin hit a hat-trick as Nacional took full advantage of Penarol's slip by thumping Wanderers 5-1 to go top.

Brian Homewood



So close…Buljubasich finished just short of Dany Verlinden's world record

Buljubasich beaten at last

CHILE

UNIVERSIDAD CATOLICA goalkeeper Jose Maria Buljubasich extended his unbeaten record to 1,352 minutes before finally letting in a goal, from a penalty, in a League game against Everton. The 34-year-old Argentinian conceded the penalty himself, upending Joel Estay, and Renato Ramos converted.

Buljubasich, who kept 14 successive clean sheets, fell just 38 minutes short of the 1,390 achieved by Club Brugge keeper Dany Verlinden in 1990, regarded as the world record.

Buljubasich announced his retirement in 2003 following a spell with River Plate but made his comeback last year when accepting an offer to play for another Chilean side, Union Espanola. He joined Universidad Catolica in January.

Catolica went on to win the Everton game 2-1 and were still unbeaten after 17 matches of the closing championship.

Brian Homewood

Anghel's Al Ittihad keep the crown

ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Rampant Tigers…Mohamed Kallon hoists the Champions League trophy after Al Ittihad's triumph

ANGHEL IORDANESCU'S love affair with Asia's continental club championship is still in full bloom after Saudi Arabia's Al Ittihad retained the Champions League title. The veteran Romanian coach, who led Riyadh's Al Hilal to the now defunct Asian Club Championship in 2000, steered Jeddah's yellow-and-black clad Tigers past 2003 champions Al Ain of the United Arab Emirates with a 5-3 aggregate win in the Final.

Al Ittihad followed up their 1-1 draw in Al Ain with a comprehensive 4-2 demolition of Milan Macala's team back home. The fact the Final was an all-Gulf affair guaranteed the trophy would remain in the west of the continent, as it has since the tournament's inception three years ago.

"It was a nice game," said Iordanescu, a former Romania coach, after the second leg. "Both teams tried to play their best, but – I'm sorry if I'm not very modest – our team played very cleverly and tactically, with a lot of discipline."

Al Ittihad's squad includes many Saudi national team players, but for all the local talent, it was former Internazionale and Monaco striker Mohamed Kallon who was the catalyst for the team's success. The Sierra Leone striker scored six times in the club's six Champions League games, including one in each leg of the Final. He converted a penalty five minutes from time in Al Ain to hand Al Ittihad their draw, then struck the opening goal after just three minutes of the return from a free-kick.

Saudi international Mohammed Noor put the hosts 2-0 up just after the half-hour, and though Humaid Majeed gave Al Ain a brief glimmer of hope from a penalty just after the break, further goals from Cameroonian Joseph-Desire Job, on loan from Middlesbrough, and Ahmed Dukhi, another Saudi international, put the tie beyond doubt. Panamanian Luis Tejada hit Al Ain's second goal in injury-time.

Al Ittihad now travel to Japan for the Club World Championship and speculation has been rife about possible acquisitions for the big-spending Saudis ahead of the tournament. Brazilian veteran Rivaldo is among the major stars linked with a move to Jeddah on a one-month loan. "It's true, we have discussed this," said Iordanescu. "But there's nothing agreed."

While Al Ittihad were confirming their status as Asia's No 1 club team, Jordan's Al Faisaly won the AFC Cup, reserved for the top sides from the continent's so-called "developing" footballing countries. The Jordanians beat Lebanon's Al Nijmeh 4-2 on aggregate in the Final to secure their first continental trophy.

Michael Church

ASIAN ROUND-UP

● French World Cup winner Marcel Desailly has quit Sports Club of QATAR just months after joining them from champions Al Gharafa. The 37-year-old former Chelsea and Milan defender has decided to return to France before hanging up his boots.

● Selangor completed a historic treble in MALAYSIA when Indonesian striker Bambang Pamungkas blasted a hat-trick to beat Perlis in the Malaysian Cup Final. Selangor recently also bagged the FA Cup and Premier League titles.

● Songnam Ilhwa won the second league stage in SOUTH KOREA to qualify for the championship play-offs, along with Ulsan Hyundai, Busan I'Park and Incheon United. Songnam, who won the championship in 2002 and 2003, topped the table after beating rivals Pohang Steelers in the final round.

● Kerala kept on course to retain INDIA'S Santosh Trophy by reaching the quarter-finals, along with Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Assam.

Michael Church & Azam Mahmood

Seeing red…Melbourne Victory skipper Kevin Muscat is sent off against Queensland

Victory roll

OCEANIA

MELBOURNE VICTORY have emerged as the Australian A League's most erratic team after storming to the top of the table following a 5-0 thumping of title favourites Sydney FC and then suffering three successive defeats to fall to sixth place. Suspensions, injuries and international call-ups contributed to the downturn, but once all the players are back Victory cannot be ruled out from remounting their challenge. The squad includes two foreign internationals in Richard Kitzbichler (Austria) and Geoffrey Claeys (Belgium) as well as Australia stalwarts such as captain Kevin Muscat – sent off in the 1-0 home defeat by Queensland Roar – and Archie Thompson. At the regular season's halfway point, Melbourne were five points behind joint leaders Sydney and Adelaide United.

● It was level-pegging in the NEW ZEALAND League with champions Auckland City, Waitakere United, Youngheart Manawatu, Canterbury United and Otago United all on six points after three games.

● An extra-time goal by Jack Samani brought Honiara a 2-1 victory over Temotu in the SOLOMON ISLANDS Cup Final. Marlon Houkarawa had put Honiara ahead just after half-time, but Duddley Seda quickly equalised. The tournament was staged for the first time since 1999 after being cancelled because of civil strife.

● Malampa won VANUATU'S inaugural Province of Origin tournament, beating Tafea 1-0 in the Final with a goal by Graham Demas.

Paul Moon

Dalian back on top

CHINA

DALIAN SHIDE'S three-year wait is over as the club reclaimed the League title that was a regular prize for them for so many years. A 2-0 win over Wuhan Huanghelou, last season's Second Division champions, wrapped up Dalian's eighth championship win in the 12 years since the dawn of professional football in China. Shanghai Shenhua were runners-up, while defending champions Shenzhen Jianlibao finished only 12th.

"It is a wonderful feeling," said Dalian coach Vladimir Petrovic, who succeeded former China striker Hao Haidong at the start of the season. "The pressure that has been on us all year has finally been released today."

Shandong Luneng finished third despite being without Serbian coach Ljubisa Tumbakovic, Bulgarian defender Predrag Pazin and midfielder Zheng Zhi, who received lengthy bans following trouble during their Asian Champions League quarter-final second-leg defeat by Saudi Arabia's Al Ittihad. Tumbakovic was suspended for six months for manhandling an assistant referee, while Zheng and Pazin were banned for six and 18 months respectively for spitting at and verbally abusing Iranian referee Mohsen Ghahremani after they were both sent off in the dying minutes.

Michael Church

JEF United spot on

JAPAN

JEF UNITED WON their first silverware for almost 20 years when beating free-scoring League leaders Gamba Osaka 5-4 on penalties after a goalless draw in the League Cup Final. The club, previously known as Furukawa, last lifted a trophy in 1987 when they were Asian club champions.

"I knew Gamba would attack from the start, but I told my players they would tire if we held firm and that our chance would come," said JEF United coach Ivica Osim.

Gamba went into the match after two consecutive League defeats, which put their hopes of a first title in danger. With five games to play, they were a point clear of Kashima Antlers, with the chasing pack of Urawa Reds, Cerezo Osaka and JEF United a few points further back. Gamba's dip coincided with Japan defender Tsuneyasu Miyamoto's absence with a knee injury, while Urawa were also dealt a blow when national team striker Tatsuya Tanaka fractured an ankle, sidelining him for six months.

Antlers surprisingly announced coach Toninho Cerezo, who led the club to the title in 2000 and 2001, will leave by mutual consent when his contract expires on January 1.

Kyoto Purple Sanga are back in the top flight after winning Division Two with five games to spare. Avispa Fukuoka look set for the other automatic promotion place.

Mike Plastow & Yumiko Nagae

League Cup of cheer…JEF United have something to celebrate at last

Running away with it…Ahmed El-Sayed and Wael Ryad take the Champions League trophy towards the Al Ahly fans after the Egyptian club's latest triumph

Al Ahly, all-conquering

AFRICAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

EGYPT'S AL AHLY continued this year's all-conquering spree with an easy 3-0 aggregate triumph over Etoile Sahel of Tunisia in the African Champions League Final.

Indeed, the emphatic nature of their unbeaten run through the entire competition, including the group phase, plus their total dominance of the Egyptian League, arguably makes them African club football's best side of the past decade.

Al Ahly, who were also African champions in 1987 and 2001, held Etoile to a 0-0 draw in Sousse, then turned on a virtuoso performance in the return at Cairo's Military Academy stadium, used because refurbishments for the International stadium had not been completed on time.

"We started nervously but after we got a brilliant goal it was relatively easy for us," said Al Ahly's Portuguese coach Manuel Jose, who also oversaw the 2001 triumph during a previous spell in charge. "We have played well all year and this was another good performance from us."

Jose was highly critical of Etoile's cautious approach during the dour first leg, which did not produce a single effort on target from either side, the Tunisians only forcing their first corner with 12 minutes left. He accused Etoile of playing with 10 men behind the ball and waiting for the counter-attack, but warned that the tactic might work better in the return, with Al Ahly carrying a heavy burden of expectation.

In fact, Etoile showed some early enterprise in the second leg, but Al Ahly took complete control of the game after going ahead in the 20th minute from a speculative Mohamed Aboutraika shot from 25 yards.

Brilliant Barakat

Captain Osama Hosni made it 2-0 seven minutes into the second half, heading home a free-kick, before Mohamed Barakat, Al Ahly's most talented performer throughout the year, crowned another fine individual display with the third, two minutes into stoppage time. The goal was typical of his late-blooming talent. He picked up the ball on the right, cut inside, then accelerated past a defender before curling a shot past Etoile's bemused Nigerian goalkeeper Austin Ejide.

"Barakat is a fantastic player, the best in Africa right now. He has been my star all year long," said Jose, whose main man was surprisingly discarded by Egypt's national team in recent months.

The 29-year-old's right-wing runs had been a constant threat, and helped make up for the loss of Angolan Gilberto with an ankle injury after 30 minutes. The combination of Gilberto's play down the left and Barakat's all-action displays has been the key to many of Al Ahly's triumphs this year.

"Etoile never recovered after we scored," Jose said. "At the break I convinced the players we were by far the better side and the second half was my kind of football. Etoile made one chance only. We controlled the game and finished well. We deserve it, we were the best."

Jose attributed the team's successful year – they also won the Egyptian League by an incredible 31 points and had a 100 per cent record after their first seven games in the new campaign – to the fact that he had managed to pull a group of star individuals together as a unit for the first time. "Most Arab players have individual qualities, but now I have stars together in a constellation," he said.

Jose derived more satisfaction from this Champions League triumph than the one in 2001, when Al Ahly beat South Africans Mamelodi Sundowns, also by a 3-0 aggregate, in the Final. "We had a very young team then, no one thought we'd win the Champions League," he said. "But this year everyone expected us to win…and despite the pressure, we did."

Al Ahly are now unbeaten in 52 matches, dating back to June last year, and their confidence is understandably sky-high. Their next big match is against Asian champions Al Ittihad of Saudi Arabia in the first game of the Club World Championship in Japan in December. Jose said: "We want to go all the way to the Final. We have nothing to lose."

Mark Gleeson

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What it all adds up to…a full house at the JJB Stadium to see Wigan take on Newcastle in the Premiership

Wigan: romance and reality

The small-town club have made a fairytale rise but only after spending millions. David Conn reports

A DECADE OR SO ago, I went to interview Dave Whelan, up in Wigan, the grimy former industrial town in the Lancashire hills, from where he ran his massive replica kits and trainers retail chain, JJB Sports.

His was a famous rise. A former professional footballer, Whelan was invalided out of the game after being carried off with a broken leg at Wembley playing for Blackburn in the 1960 FA Cup Final against Wolves. He invested his small insurance payout in a Wigan market stall selling toiletries. With his work ethic and eye for popular trends, he built up his business, opening a string of discount stores, which he sold for £1million in 1978.

Understanding acutely the male love of browsing in sports shops, Whelan bought one, in Wigan, then developed it unrelentingly into JJB, its racks of branded sports gear sprouting garishly on every high street in England. In November 1994, Whelan and JJB made it to the stock exchange, which valued the company at £64m.

Then, it was just a small part of the story that, with a small slice of his new wealth, Whelan had taken over the local football club. It seemed an act of charity; Wigan Athletic's small-town status was weakened yet further because Wigan is a stronghold for rugby league.

The football club only made it to the professional Football League as recently as 1978, and, when Whelan picked them up, they were in the bottom division and going bust. He told me that it would have been a humiliation to see the club fold – the town, after all, still had its pride.

Just a week earlier, by coincidence, I had been to Wigan's ramshackle ground, Springfield Park, not to watch them but the second-string hopefuls and recovering first-teamers of Blackburn, then the Premier League champions. To make conversation, I said: "Blackburn's reserves play their home games at Springfield Park, don't they?" Whelan's face didn't crack. "They won't be doing for much longer," was his pithy reply.

Ten years on, once humble Wigan are the Premier League's surprise gust of fresh air. They lost only 1-0 to the billionaire's club, Chelsea, in their first top-flight game, then lost, 1-0 again, to Charlton, but after that galloped to November without losing, playing direct, confident football, beating Everton and Aston Villa away. On October 15, Jason Roberts scored the goal that gave them a 1-0 win at home to Newcastle, possibly the greatest result in the club's history.

Sadly, in the Premiership era, it would be a mistake to get too

misty-eyed about the romance of a small club's rise, even one as remarkable as Wigan's. True, local pride, honest, gutsy players, a shrewd manager in Paul Jewell and formidable chairman all feature in the cast. But the inescapable fact is that Whelan has thrown a fortune at taking Wigan to the Premiership.

JJB Sports has burgeoned into an empire of superstores, now valued at £419m. Whelan and his family still own nearly 40 per cent of it, worth £168m. In 2005 alone he was paid about £300,000 as the chairman and his dividend was £2.8m cash.

He has become the sporting king of Wigan, also buying Wigan Warriors rugby league club and the local rugby union club, Orrell.

Blackburn's reserves are long banished, but Springfield Park is gone too, demolished because Whelan built a new, cantilevered, 25,000-seater arena, costing £25m, called, inevitably, the JJB Stadium. He declared he wanted Wigan to make it to the Premier League, and the club itself says the venture has cost him £60m, although some estimates run to £75m.

Last summer, after Wigan made it to the top division and feature writers flocked to the town determined to find a story of clogs, tripe and simple, honest folk, Whelan made another £6m available to give the club a fighting chance of staying up.

Jewell selection

Here, though, there is an admirable strain to Wigan's story. For all Whelan's wealth and the ubiquitous JJB branding, this is not a vulgar tale of money chucked in for overpaid stars to buy promotions and Premier League status. In the early days, Wigan made headlines by signing Spanish players Isidro Diaz, Jesus Seba and Roberto Martinez, the "three amigos", and Whelan scorched through eight managers in his impatience for progress. Then, in May 2001, he decided on Jewell, a former Wigan player who has become universally admired for his well-judged signings, motivation and tactical nous.

Money well spent…Dave Whelan

Jewell had worked another minor miracle in his very first job, making Bradford City the most unlikely Premiership club – until Wigan – then, in 1999-2000, even more remarkably, keeping them up with a final day, nail-biting 1-0 win against Liverpool. Jewell left Bradford because of differences with owner Geoffrey Richmond, went to Sheffield Wednesday when that club was on a serious slide, then came to Wigan, who were still in the old Second Division, English football's third flight.

Whelan gave Jewell millions to spend and set a target – to be in the top six by Christmas. Jewell, with a good knowledge of players at that frantic level, went shopping, signing goalkeeper John Filan for £600,000 from Blackburn, one-time Everton defender Matt Jackson on a free from Norwich, midfielder Jason Jarrett for £75,000 from Bury and striker Nathan Ellington for £1.2m from Bristol Rovers. This was a huge investment at that level, but it paid off, those players forming the core of a team that won promotion to the second level in 2003, then up to the Premiership last season.

Whelan's ambitions for the club extend beyond a season or two of glory in the top flight. A man who has built his fortune in a sportswear boom partly created by the Premiership's commercial revolution, he knows what is required financially to compete. Post-Bosman, comparative bargains are still to be had. Jewell made the £6m stretch to buy striker Henri Camara from Wolves, midfielder Damien Francis from relegated Norwich, defender Pascal Chimbonda from Bastia and right-back Ryan Taylor from Tranmere.

Wigan have attacked the Premier League in a way that suggests that below the unreachable spending power of Chelsea, Arsenal and Manchester United, the middle level is suddenly more open to traditionally smaller clubs, to teams demonstrating unity and a strong sense of purpose – Charlton and Bolton have also climbed high in the Premiership this season.

Charlton, whose ground, The Valley, was still derelict 13 years ago, have, in truth, a more romantic story than Wigan's. Their recovery was led by a passionate fans' campaign and supporter-friendly board. Wigan, to put it bluntly, have been built by the cash and uncompromising ambition of a multi-millionaire sports retailing magnate. That, in a Premier League where money rules, is as romantic as it gets these days.

MEDIA WATCH

Shouting the odds…Wenger and Mourinho

The Mourinho-Wenger spat

"Arsene Wenger was widely reported to have said that Chelsea will have lost 'the big belief' because of recent setbacks, though he actually said 'a little bit of the belief has gone'. Jose Mourinho responded in characteristically outspoken fashion after seeing Chelsea reassert their authority with a 4-2 win at home to Blackburn Rovers on Saturday. 'I think he is one of these people who is a voyeur,' he said. 'He likes to watch other people. There are some guys who, when they are at home, have a big telescope to see what happens in other families. He speaks and speaks and speaks about Chelsea.' "

● *The Guardian's* Jon Brodkin reports the start of the spat on October 31

"Furious at what he described as 'disrespectful and unacceptable' comments from the Chelsea manager, Wenger talked darkly about taking the matter further. 'If you give success to stupid people, it makes them more stupid sometimes and not more intelligent,' he said, in a clear reference to Mourinho."

● On November 2 *The Times'* Matt Dickinson reports Wenger's response

"The war of words between Mourinho and Wenger reached fever pitch yesterday. Mourinho, whose mood was blackened after his side went down 1-0 in a limp display at Real Betis in the Champions League, launched a heated response last night. He said: 'We have a file we can show of quotes from Arsene Wenger about Chelsea FC in the last 12 months. And it is not a small file. It is 120 pages. It's time to stop. And if he does not stop, we are there in a fight.' "

● David Hytner and Nigel Clarke tell *Express* readers of Mourinho's latest tirade on November 2

"Wenger is expected to meet his vice-chairman David Dein in the next 48 hours to discuss whether the club should take legal action against the Chelsea boss. Wenger said: 'I haven't decided whether to take any action yet. If I am attacked, I respond.' "

● *The Daily Mail's* Neil Ashton reckons it might all end up in court, also on November 3

"For me the story is now over. I don't want to speak about it any more. But I will still give my opinion about Chelsea if I want to… We are not in a dictatorship."

● Wenger stays resolute in November 3's *London Evening Standard*

"We learned much last week as English football turned into a circus for a few giddy days, not least because Mourinho and Wenger are just as good at slapstick comedy as they are at sporting philosophy. The pair proved they have a special talent for throwing the verbal equivalent of custard pies in each other's faces."

● November 6's *Daily Express* suggests the whole affair is more silly than serious as the furore runs out of steam

TALENT SCOUT

TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY

Sergio AGUERO

Teenager rampaging to a place in Argentina squad

A YEAR AGO Sergio Aguero was considered too young for Argentina's Under-20s. Yet now there is a campaign to get the 17-year-old striker into the World Cup squad. The big kick-off in Germany comes hard on the heels of Aguero's 18th birthday. And if he does make the trip he will do so with an astonishing three years of professional experience behind him.

Independiente gave him his first-team debut on July 5, 2003, a month and three days after he turned 15. A little more than a year later came his first senior goal. But he was overlooked when Argentina named their squad for the South American Under-20 Championship early in 2005. It was not a controversial omission since he was competing for a place with players who were three years older.

In the event, Argentina's strikers disappointed and all were dropped, with Aguero coming into the Under-20 squad for the World Youth Cup, held in Holland last June. He made only four substitute appearances, but one was decisive. In the Final against Nigeria he was brought down for the penalty from which Barcelona's Lionel Messi scored the title-winning goal.

Messi and Aguero shared a room during the tournament. The two great hopes of Argentinian football struck up a firm friendship and formed a mutual admiration society. "I get excited about lining up alongside Aguero," says Messi. "He's in a different class, a fantastic player. He takes opponents on, he's quick, strong, scores goals and plays for the team."

Such virtues had prompted Independiente to play Aguero up front, rather than in the attacking midfield position he had usually filled on his way up through the ranks. As a striker, El Kun – a nickname derived from his similarity to the cartoon Japanese demon Kun Kun – could torment the lives of defenders.

"Aguero has explosive acceleration," says Cesar Luis Menotti, his former coach at Independiente. "Physically, he's a lot like Romario."

It is an astute comparison. The stocky youngster's lower body strength gives him both his speed off the mark and his capacity to shield the ball with his back to goal. And there is something of the young Romario in his rapier dribbles, his cool finishing and the confidence to try his tricks.

Current Independiente coach Julio Cesar Falcioni has watched Aguero blossom into the sensation of the Argentinian season. "He's made massive strides in the past few months," says Falcioni. "He's realised what he's capable of and how far he can go. He's one of those players who tips the balance, who changes the equation of the game with a single dribble. That's why clubs are willing to offer astronomical sums for him."

Aguero is a fan of English football, and there has been speculation linking him with Chelsea. But the youngster is in no hurry to move. "I want to stay a little longer and win a title with Independiente," he says. "I'm working hard to try and make the World Cup squad. I know one day it will be important to move to a club in Europe, but for the moment I'm fine where I am, and I would rather go to the World Cup than move to Europe."

He is not alone. Plenty of his countrymen would also love to see him on the plane to Germany.

Tim Vickery

FACT FILE

Club Independiente
Country Argentina
Born June 2, 1988, in Quilmes, Buenos Aires
Honours World Youth Cup 2005

NELSON

Right-back creating a storm at Benfica

"NELSON IS A huge talent." The words are those of Jose Mourinho, and you know you're doing something right when the Chelsea manager takes the time to compliment your work. Mourinho isn't the only one who has been raving about Nelson, Benfica's new right-back. Far from it. Since the 22-year-old Cape Verdian arrived in Lisbon from Boavista as the summer transfer window closed, he has commanded praise from home as well as abroad.

So why all the fuss? Well, let's start with the numbers. Nelson led the League assists table with six after nine rounds of matches, and two of them – pinpoint crosses for striker Nuno Gomes to convert – came in Benfica's first victory away to rivals FC Porto in 14 years.

Nelson's passing is certainly one of his best attributes, but there are plenty of other weapons in the armoury. He is fast and disciplined, and has the knack of getting past defenders with apparent ease. In the first half of a recent Champions League match away to Villarreal, Nelson dribbled past three opponents with a lightning quick move before supplying a fine cross to Nuno Gomes. This time, the striker missed the opportunity to score, but the warning signs were there, and in the second half Villarreal manager Manuel Pellegrini had two men on Nelson every time he was on the ball. After the match – a 1-1 draw – much of the talk was centred on this young right-back who had dictated play in the Spanish club's own backyard.

Benfica coach Ronald Koeman has expressed surprise about how quickly Nelson has adapted to life at the Stadium of Light. After all, he had had only one season of top-flight football under his belt before moving to Lisbon. But Koeman acknowledges that Nelson is already a key member of the side and, clearly, neither he nor the club want to lose him. Although Nelson has been at Benfica for only three months, his performances have already earned him a pay rise. The Reds have realised what they have on their hands and do not want to lose him to a richer club in the winter transfer window.

Pedro Pinto

FACT FILE

Club Benfica (Por)
Country Cape Verde Islands
Born June 6, 1983, in Cape Verde
Previous clubs Salgueiros (Por), Boavista (Por)

Franck RIBERY

In Papin's footsteps at Marseille

THERE ARE UNCANNY parallels between former Marseille striker extraordinaire Jean-Pierre Papin and the club's latest hero, French Under-21 attacking midfielder Franck Ribery. Both were born in the Channel port of Boulogne to working-class families, both battle on the pitch for the full 90 minutes, and both came to Marseille in controversial circumstances. In 1986, Papin was set to join Monaco from Club Brugge when he was snatched away by Marseille president Bernard Tapie. Ribery was granted a free transfer to the Stade Velodrome this summer after FIFA deemed that his former club, Galatasaray, whom he joined from Metz last January, had failed to make several wage payments and were thus in breach of contract.

Ribery and Papin could soon have something else in common. Within months of joining Marseille, Papin had clawed his way into the national squad; if Ribery maintains his high standards, *Les Bleus* coach Raymond Domenech will be hard-pressed to ignore him.

The 22-year-old, at home on either flank or when cutting inside, is always looking to confront defenders, his pace, flawless ball control and sinuous changes of direction make him highly elusive, and he comes up with rearguard-shredding through balls. "Ribery has football in his blood, he's an instinctive player," says Marseille coach Jean Fernandez. "He reminds me so much of Chris Waddle."

However, there are some negatives. Ribery tends to overdo the diving to win free-kicks and his temperament is suspect, while off the pitch his judgement and behaviour have been found wanting at times. This summer, for example, he claimed to police that his ex-agent and Galatasaray's director of sport had turned up at his parents' home in Boulogne and threatened him with a baseball bat. An investigation concluded the pair had visited him but not armed with anything, and a magistrate denounced the complaint as sheer fantasy.

Shame, because Ribery's talent is certainly not trumped up.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Marseille
Country France
Born April 1, 1983, in Boulogne
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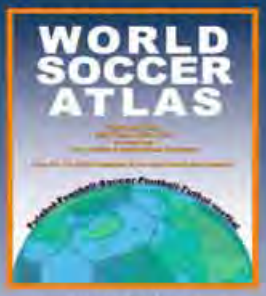

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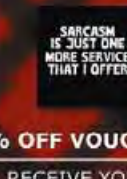

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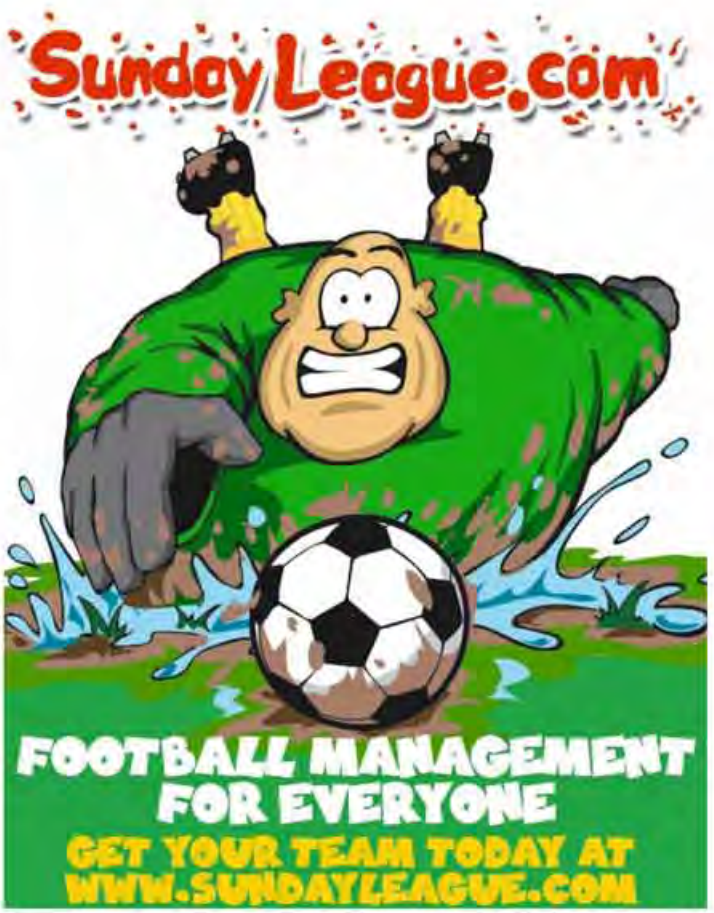

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England
France
Germany
Ghana
Holland
Iran
Italy
Ivory Coast
Japan
Mexico
Paraguay
Poland
Portugal
Saudi Arabia
Serbia & Montenegro
South Korea
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Togo
Trinidad & Tobago
Tunisia
Ukraine
United States

Finals draw – December 9, in Leipzig

PLAY-OFFS

Asia-CONCACAF

1st leg
Nov 12 - Port-of-Spain
Trinidad & Tobago 1 (Birchall 77)
Bahrain 1 (Salman 72)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 24,991. **Ref:** Shield (Aus)
Trinidad & Tobago: Jack - A John, M Andrews, Lawrence, Birchall, Whitley, Edwards, Spann, Yorke, Latapy (Scotland 66), S John (Jones 82).
Bahrain: H Ali - Marzooq, Jalal, Abdulrahman, H Ahmed, Salmeen, T Mohamed (Taleb 77), Mahfoodh, Baba, Salman (Aaish 90), M Hubail.

2nd leg
Nov 16 - Manama
Bahrain 0
Trinidad & Tobago 1 (Lawrence 49)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO *2-1 on agg*
Bahrain: H Ali - Jalal, Abdulrahman, H Ahmed, Basheer, T Mohamed, Salman (Aaish 80), Mahfoodh, Baba, M Hubail, A Hubail. *Sent off: Baba 90min.*
Trinidad & Tobago: Jack - A John, M Andrews, Lawrence, Birchall (Spann 21), Whitley, Edwards (Cox 82), Jones (Latapy 78), C Gray, Yorke, S John.

Oceania-South America

1st leg
Nov 12 - Montevideo
Uruguay 1 (Dario Rodriguez 37)
Australia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 55,000. **Ref:** Larsen (Den)
Uruguay: Carini - Lopez (G Rodriguez 63), Montero, Dario Rodriguez, Diogo, Garcia, Perez, Recoba, Forlan (D Silva 17), Zalayeta (Estoyanoff 63), R Morales.
Australia: Schwarzer - Neill, T Vidmar, Popovic, Chipperfield, Emerton, Kewell, Grella, Thompson (Bresciano 53), Culina, Viduka (Aloisi 80).

2nd leg
Nov 16 - Sydney
Australia 1 (Bresciano 35)
Uruguay 0
Aet. **HT:** 1-0. **90mins:** 1-0. **Att:** 82,698.
Ref: Medina Cantalejo (Spa)
Agg 1-1. **AUSTRALIA** *4-2 on pens*
Australia: Schwarzer - Neill, Popovic (Kewell 32), T Vidmar, Bresciano (Aloisi 96), Cahill, Chipperfield, Culina, Emerton (Skoko 111), Grella, Viduka.
Uruguay: Carini - Diogo, Lugano, Montero (Sosa 82), Dario Rodriguez, G Rodriguez, Garcia, Recoba (Zalayeta 73), Varela, R Morales, Regueiro (Estoyanoff 98).

Europe

1st leg
Nov 12 - Oslo
Norway 0
Czech Republic 1 (Smicer 32)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 24,264. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)
Norway: Myhre - Bergdolmo, Hagen, Hangeland, Riise, Haestad, Grindheim (Stromstad 86), Solli (Braaten 46), Iversen (Arst 79), Gamst Pedersen, Carew.
Czech Republic: Cech - Grygera, Rozehnal, Ujfalusi, Jankulovski, Poborsky, Galasek, Rosicky (Jarosik 87), Nedved, Smicer (Heinz 79), Baros (Polak 60).

2nd leg
Nov 16 - Prague
Czech Republic 1 (Rosicky 35)
Norway 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 17,464. **Ref:** Poll (Eng)
CZECH REPUBLIC *2-0 on agg*
Czech Republic: Cech - Grygera, Rozehnal, Ujfalusi, Jankulovski, Poborsky, Polak, Rosicky (Kovac 68), Nedved, Smicer (Stajner 75), Baros (Plasil 90).
Norway: Myhre - Hoiland, Hagen, Hangeland, Riise (M Johnsen 90), Helstad (Arst 58), Stromstad, Haestad, Gamst Pedersen, Carew, Iversen (Solli 46).

1st leg
Nov 12 - Madrid
Spain 5 (Luis Garcia 8, 16, 72, Fernando Torres pen 65, Morientes 78)
Slovakia 1 (S Nemeth 48)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 54,851. **Ref:** De Santis (Ita)
Spain: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Pablo, Puyol, Del Horno, Luis Garcia (Morientes 75), Xavi, Albelda (Xabi Alonso 64), Reyes (Vicente 54), Raul, Fernando Torres.
Slovakia: Contofalsky - Zabavnik, Petras, Kratochvil, Had, Skrtel, Holosko (S Nemeth 46), Karhan (Janocko 72), Hodur (Gresko 67), Hlinka, Vittek. *Sent off: Had 63min.*

2nd leg
Nov 16 - Bratislava
Slovakia 1 (Holosko 50)
Spain 1 (Villa 71)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 23,587. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
SPAIN *6-2 on agg*
Slovakia: Contofalsky - Zabavnik, Skrtel, Kratochvil, J Durica, Krajcik, Hlinka, Gresko (Cech 78), Hodur (Holosko 46), S Nemeth (Fodrek 83), Vittek.
Spain: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Pablo, Puyol, Antonio Lopez, Baraja, Xabi Alonso, Xavi (Sergio Ramos 74), Vicente, Raul (Morientes 65), Fernando Torres (Villa 61).

1st leg
Nov 12 - Berne
Switzerland 2 (Senderos 41, Behrami 86)
Turkey 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 31,130. **Ref:** Michel (Slk)
Switzerland: Zuberbuhler - Degen, Muller, Senderos, Magnin, Gygax, Cabanas, Vogel, Barnetta (Behrami 83), Frei, Streller (Vonlanthen 77).
Turkey: Volkan - Serkan, Alpay, Ibrahim Toraman, Umit Ozat (Halil Altintop 77), Huseyin, Nihat (Okan Buruk 46), Selcuk, Tumer, Tuncay (Ergun 83), Hakan Sukur.

2nd leg
Nov 16 - Istanbul
Turkey 4 (Tuncay 24, 38, 89, Necati pen 52)
Switzerland 2 (Frei pen 2, Streller 84)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 42,000. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Agg 4-4. **SWITZERLAND** *on away goals*
Turkey: Volkan - Hamit Altintop, Tolga, Alpay, Ergun, Selcuk, Serhat (Tumer 70), Emre Belozoglu (Basturk 82), Tuncay, Necati (Fatih Tekke 80), Hakan Sukur.
Switzerland: Zuberbuhler - Degen (Behrami 46), Muller, Senderos, Spycher, Vogel, Barnetta, Cabanas, Wicky, Gygax (Streller 33; Huggel 87), Frei.

Play-off winners qualified for finals

AFRICA

5 finals berths

Group 1

GROUP 1 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
TOGO	10	7	2	1	20	8	23
Senegal	10	6	3	1	21	8	21
Zambia	10	6	1	3	16	10	19
Congo	10	3	1	6	10	14	10
Mali	10	2	2	6	11	14	8
Liberia	10	1	1	8	3	27	4

05.06.04 Senegal-Congo 2-0
05.06.04 Zambia-Togo 1-0
06.06.04 Liberia-Mali 1-0
19.06.04 Mali-Zambia 1-1
20.06.04 Congo-Liberia 3-0
20.06.04 Togo-Senegal 3-1
03.07.04 Senegal-Zambia 1-0
04.07.04 Congo-Mali 1-0
04.07.04 Liberia-Togo 0-0
04.09.04 Zambia-Liberia 1-0
05.09.04 Mali-Senegal 2-2
05.09.04 Togo-Congo 2-0
10.10.04 Congo-Zambia 2-3
10.10.04 Liberia-Senegal 0-3
10.10.04 Togo-Mali 1-0
26.03.05 Senegal-Liberia 6-1
26.03.05 Zambia-Congo 2-0
27.03.05 Mali-Togo 1-2
05.06.05 Congo-Senegal 0-0
05.06.05 Mali-Liberia 4-1
05.06.05 Togo-Zambia 4-1
18.06.05 Senegal-Togo 2-2
18.06.05 Zambia-Mali 2-1
19.06.05 Liberia-Congo 0-2
03.09.05 Mali-Congo 2-0
03.09.05 Zambia-Senegal 0-1
04.09.05 Togo-Liberia 3-0
01.10.05 Liberia-Zambia 0-5
08.10.05 Congo-Togo 2-3
08.10.05 Senegal-Mali 3-0

Group 2

GROUP 2 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
GHANA	10	6	3	1	17	4	21
DR Congo	10	4	4	2	14	10	16
South Africa	10	5	1	4	12	14	16
Burkina Faso	10	4	1	5	14	13	13
Cape Verde Is	10	3	1	6	8	15	10
Uganda	10	2	2	6	6	15	8

05.06.04 Burkina Faso-Ghana 1-0
05.06.04 South Africa-Cape Verde Is 2-1
05.06.04 Uganda-DR Congo 1-0
19.06.04 Cape Verde Is-Uganda 1-0
20.06.04 DR Congo-Burkina Faso 3-2
20.06.04 Ghana-South Africa 3-0
03.07.04 Cape Verde Is-DR Congo 1-1
03.07.04 South Africa-Burkina Faso 2-0
03.07.04 Uganda-Ghana 1-1
04.09.04 Burkina Faso-Uganda 2-0
05.09.04 DR Congo-South Africa 1-0
05.09.04 Ghana-Cape Verde Is 2-0
09.10.04 Cape Verde Is-Burkina Faso 1-0
10.10.04 Ghana-DR Congo 0-0
10.10.04 Uganda-South Africa 0-1
26.03.05 Burkina Faso-Cape Verde Is 1-2
26.03.05 South Africa-Uganda 2-1
27.03.05 DR Congo-Ghana 1-1
04.06.05 Cape Verde Is-South Africa 1-2
05.06.05 DR Congo-Uganda 4-0
05.06.05 Ghana-Burkina Faso 2-1
18.06.05 Burkina Faso-DR Congo 2-0
18.06.05 South Africa-Ghana 0-2
18.06.05 Uganda-Cape Verde Is 1-0
03.09.05 Burkina Faso-South Africa 3-1
04.09.05 DR Congo-Cape Verde Is 2-1
04.09.05 Ghana-Uganda 2-0
08.10.05 Cape Verde Is-Ghana 0-4
08.10.05 South Africa-DR Congo 2-2
08.10.05 Uganda-Burkina Faso 2-2

Group 3

GROUP 3 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
IVORY COAST	10	7	1	2	20	7	22
Cameroon	10	6	3	1	18	10	21
Egypt	10	5	2	3	26	15	17
Libya	10	3	3	4	8	10	12
Sudan	10	1	3	6	6	22	6
Benin	10	1	2	7	9	23	5

06.06.04 Cameroon-Benin 2-1
06.06.04 Ivory Coast-Libya 2-0
06.06.04 Sudan-Egypt 0-3
18.06.04 Libya-Cameroon 0-0
20.06.04 Benin-Sudan 1-1
20.06.04 Egypt-Ivory Coast 1-2
03.07.04 Sudan-Libya 0-1
04.07.04 Benin-Egypt 3-3
04.07.04 Cameroon-Ivory Coast 2-0
03.09.04 Libya-Benin 4-1
05.09.04 Egypt-Cameroon 3-2
05.09.04 Ivory Coast-Sudan 5-0
08.10.04 Libya-Egypt 2-1
09.10.04 Sudan-Cameroon 1-1
10.10.04 Benin-Ivory Coast 0-1
27.03.05 Cameroon-Sudan 2-1
27.03.05 Egypt-Libya 4-1
27.03.05 Ivory Coast-Benin 3-0
03.06.05 Libya-Ivory Coast 0-0
04.06.05 Benin-Cameroon 1-4
05.06.05 Egypt-Sudan 6-1
19.06.05 Cameroon-Libya 1-0
19.06.05 Ivory Coast-Egypt 2-0
17.08.05 Sudan-Benin 1-0
02.09.05 Libya-Sudan 0-0

04.09.05 Egypt-Benin ... 4-1
04.09.05 Ivory Coast-Cameroon ... 2-3
08.10.05 Cameroon-Egypt ... 1-1
08.10.05 Sudan-Ivory Coast ... 1-3
09.10.05 Benin-Libya ... 1-0

Group 4

GROUP 4 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ANGOLA	10	6	3	1	12	6	21
Nigeria	10	6	3	1	21	7	21
Zimbabwe	10	4	3	3	13	14	15
Gabon	10	2	4	4	11	13	10
Algeria	10	1	5	4	8	15	8
Rwanda	10	1	2	7	6	16	5

05.06.04 Algeria-Angola ... 0-0
05.06.04 Gabon-Zimbabwe ... 1-1
05.06.04 Nigeria-Rwanda ... 2-0
19.06.04 Rwanda-Gabon ... 3-1
20.06.04 Angola-Nigeria ... 1-0
20.06.04 Zimbabwe-Algeria ... 1-1
03.07.04 Gabon-Angola ... 2-2
03.07.04 Nigeria-Algeria ... 1-0
03.07.04 Rwanda-Zimbabwe ... 0-2
03.09.04 Zimbabwe-Nigeria ... 0-3
05.09.04 Algeria-Gabon ... 0-3
05.09.04 Angola-Rwanda ... 1-0
09.10.04 Gabon-Nigeria ... 1-1
09.10.04 Rwanda-Algeria ... 1-1
10.10.04 Angola-Zimbabwe ... 1-0
26.03.05 Nigeria-Gabon ... 2-0
27.03.05 Algeria-Rwanda ... 1-0
27.03.05 Zimbabwe-Angola ... 2-0
05.06.05 Angola-Algeria ... 2-1
05.06.05 Rwanda-Nigeria ... 1-1
05.06.05 Zimbabwe-Gabon ... 1-0
18.06.05 Gabon-Rwanda ... 3-0
18.06.05 Nigeria-Angola ... 1-1
19.06.05 Algeria-Zimbabwe ... 2-2
04.09.05 Algeria-Nigeria ... 2-5
04.09.05 Angola-Gabon ... 3-0
04.09.05 Zimbabwe-Rwanda ... 3-1
08.10.05 Gabon-Algeria ... 0-0
08.10.05 Nigeria-Zimbabwe ... 5-1
08.10.05 Rwanda-Angola ... 0-1

Group 5

GROUP 5 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
TUNISIA	10	6	3	1	25	9	21
Morocco	10	5	5	0	17	7	20
Guinea	10	5	2	3	15	10	17
Kenya	10	3	1	6	8	17	10
Botswana	10	3	0	7	10	18	9
Malawi	10	1	3	6	12	26	6

05.06.04 Malawi-Morocco ... 1-1
05.06.04 Tunisia-Botswana ... 4-1
19.06.04 Botswana-Malawi ... 2-0
20.06.04 Guinea-Tunisia ... 2-1
03.07.04 Botswana-Morocco ... 0-1
03.07.04 Malawi-Guinea ... 1-1
04.09.04 Kenya-Malawi ... 3-2
04.09.04 Morocco-Tunisia ... 1-1
05.09.04 Guinea-Botswana ... 4-0
09.10.04 Botswana-Kenya ... 2-1
09.10.04 Malawi-Tunisia ... 2-2
10.10.04 Guinea-Morocco ... 1-1
17.11.04 Kenya-Guinea ... 2-1
09.02.05 Morocco-Kenya ... 5-1
26.03.05 Kenya-Botswana ... 1-0
26.03.05 Morocco-Guinea ... 1-0
26.03.05 Tunisia-Malawi ... 7-0
04.06.05 Botswana-Tunisia ... 1-3
04.06.05 Morocco-Malawi ... 4-1
05.06.05 Guinea-Kenya ... 1-0
11.06.05 Tunisia-Guinea ... 2-0
18.06.05 Kenya-Morocco ... 0-0
18.06.05 Malawi-Botswana ... 1-3
17.08.05 Tunisia-Kenya ... 1-0
03.09.05 Kenya-Tunisia ... 0-2
03.09.05 Morocco-Botswana ... 1-0
04.09.05 Guinea-Malawi ... 3-1
08.10.05 Botswana-Guinea ... 1-2
08.10.05 Malawi-Kenya ... 3-0
08.10.05 Tunisia-Morocco ... 2-2

Group winners qualified for finals

ASIA

4.5 finals berths

2nd stage

Group A

GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SAUDI ARABIA	6	4	2	0	10	1	14
SOUTH KOREA	6	3	1	2	9	5	10
Uzbekistan	6	1	2	3	7	11	5
Kuwait	6	1	1	4	4	13	4

09.02.05 South Korea-Kuwait ... 2-0
09.02.05 Uzbekistan-Saudi Arabia ... 1-1
25.03.05 Kuwait-Uzbekistan ... 2-1
25.03.05 Saudi Arabia-South Korea ... 2-0
30.03.05 Kuwait-Saudi Arabia ... 0-0
30.03.05 South Korea-Uzbekistan ... 2-1
03.06.05 Saudi Arabia-Kuwait ... 3-0
03.06.05 Uzbekistan-South Korea ... 1-1
08.06.05 Kuwait-South Korea ... 0-4
08.06.05 Saudi Arabia-Uzbekistan ... 3-0
17.08.05 South Korea-Saudi Arabia ... 0-1
17.08.05 Uzbekistan-Kuwait ... 3-2

Group B

GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
JAPAN	6	5	0	1	9	4	15
IRAN	6	4	1	1	7	3	13
Bahrain	6	1	1	4	4	7	4
North Korea	6	1	0	5	5	11	3

09.02.05 Bahrain-Iran ... 0-0
09.02.05 Japan-North Korea ... 2-1
25.03.05 Iran-Japan ... 2-1
25.03.05 North Korea-Bahrain ... 1-2
30.03.05 Japan-Bahrain ... 1-0
30.03.05 North Korea-Iran ... 0-2
03.06.05 Iran-North Korea ... 1-0
03.06.05 Bahrain-Japan ... 0-1
08.06.05 Iran-Bahrain ... 1-0
08.06.05 North Korea-Japan ... 0-2
17.08.05 Bahrain-North Korea ... 2-3
17.08.05 Japan-Iran ... 2-1

Group winners and runners-up qualified for finals. The two third-placed teams entered the Asian play-off

Asian play-off

08.10.05 Uzbekistan-Bahrain ... 1-1
12.10.05 Bahrain-Uzbekistan ... 0-0
Agg 1-1. Bahrain on away goals

Bahrain met Trinidad & Tobago, the fourth-placed CONCACAF team, in the Asia-CONCACAF play-off (see page 75) for a place in finals

CONCACAF

3.5 finals berths

3rd stage

3RD STAGE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
UNITED STATES	10	7	1	2	16	6	22
MEXICO	10	7	1	2	22	9	22
COSTA RICA	10	5	1	4	15	14	16
Trinidad & Tob	10	4	1	5	10	15	13
Guatemala	10	3	2	5	16	18	11
Panama	10	0	2	8	4	21	2

09.02.05 Costa Rica-Mexico ... 1-2
09.02.05 Panama-Guatemala ... 0-0
09.02.05 Trinidad & Tob-United States ... 1-2
26.03.05 Costa Rica-Panama ... 2-1
26.03.05 Guatemala-Trinidad & Tob ... 5-1
27.03.05 Mexico-United States ... 2-1
30.03.05 Panama-Mexico ... 1-1
30.03.05 Trinidad & Tob-Costa Rica ... 0-0
30.03.05 United States-Guatemala ... 2-0
04.06.05 Guatemala-Mexico ... 0-2
04.06.05 Trinidad & Tob-Panama ... 2-0
04.06.05 United States-Costa Rica ... 3-0
08.06.05 Costa Rica-Guatemala ... 3-2
08.06.05 Mexico-Trinidad & Tob ... 2-0
08.06.05 Panama-United States ... 0-3
17.08.05 Guatemala-Panama ... 2-1
17.08.05 Mexico-Costa Rica ... 2-0
17.08.05 United States-Trinidad & Tob ... 1-0
03.09.05 Panama-Costa Rica ... 1-3
03.09.05 Trinidad & Tob-Guatemala ... 3-2
03.09.05 United States-Mexico ... 2-0
07.09.05 Costa Rica-Trinidad & Tob ... 2-0
07.09.05 Guatemala-United States ... 0-0
07.09.05 Mexico-Panama ... 5-0
08.10.05 Costa Rica-United States ... 3-0
08.10.05 Mexico-Guatemala ... 5-2
08.10.05 Panama-Trinidad & Tob ... 0-1
12.10.05 Guatemala-Costa Rica ... 3-1
12.10.05 Trinidad & Tob-Mexico ... 2-1
12.10.05 United States-Panama ... 2-0

Top three qualified for finals. Trinidad & Tobago met Bahrain, the winners of the Asian play-off, in the Asia-CONCACAF play-off (see page 75) for a place in finals

EUROPE

14 finals berths (including hosts Germany, who qualify automatically)

Group 1

GROUP 1 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HOLLAND	12	10	2	0	27	3	32
Czech Republic	12	9	0	3	35	12	27
Romania	12	8	1	3	20	10	25
Finland	12	5	1	6	21	19	16
Macedonia	12	2	3	7	11	24	9
Armenia	12	2	1	9	9	25	7
Andorra	12	1	2	9	4	34	5

18.08.04 Macedonia-Armenia ... 3-0
18.08.04 Romania-Finland ... 2-1
04.09.04 Finland-Andorra ... 3-0
04.09.04 Romania-Macedonia ... 2-1
08.09.04 Andorra-Romania ... 1-5
08.09.04 Armenia-Finland ... 0-2
08.09.04 Holland-Czech Republic ... 2-0
09.10.04 Czech Republic-Romania ... 1-0
09.10.04 Finland-Armenia ... 3-1
09.10.04 Macedonia-Holland ... 2-2
13.10.04 Andorra-Macedonia ... 1-0
13.10.04 Armenia-Czech Republic ... 0-3
13.10.04 Holland-Finland ... 3-1
17.11.04 Andorra-Holland ... 0-3
17.11.04 Armenia-Romania ... 1-1
17.11.04 Macedonia-Czech Republic ... 0-2
09.02.05 Macedonia-Andorra ... 0-0
26.03.05 Armenia-Andorra ... 2-1
26.03.05 Czech Republic-Finland ... 4-3
26.03.05 Romania-Holland ... 0-2
30.03.05 Andorra-Czech Republic ... 0-4
30.03.05 Holland-Armenia ... 2-0
30.03.05 Macedonia-Romania ... 1-2
04.06.05 Armenia-Macedonia ... 1-2
04.06.05 Czech Republic-Andorra ... 8-1
04.06.05 Holland-Romania ... 2-0
08.06.05 Czech Republic-Macedonia ... 6-1
08.06.05 Finland-Holland ... 0-4
08.06.05 Romania-Armenia ... 3-0
17.08.05 Macedonia-Finland ... 0-3
17.08.05 Romania-Andorra ... 2-0
03.09.05 Andorra-Finland ... 0-0
03.09.05 Armenia-Holland ... 0-1
03.09.05 Romania-Czech Republic ... 2-0
07.09.05 Czech Republic-Armenia ... 4-1
07.09.05 Finland-Macedonia ... 5-1
07.09.05 Holland-Andorra ... 4-0
08.10.05 Czech Republic-Holland ... 0-2
08.10.05 Finland-Romania ... 0-1
12.10.05 Andorra-Armenia ... 0-3
12.10.05 Finland-Czech Republic ... 0-3
12.10.05 Holland-Macedonia ... 0-0

Group 2

GROUP 2 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
UKRAINE	12	7	4	1	18	7	25
Turkey	12	6	5	1	23	9	23
Denmark	12	6	4	2	24	12	22
Greece	12	6	3	3	15	9	21
Albania	12	4	1	7	11	20	13
Georgia	12	2	4	6	14	25	10
Kazakhstan	12	0	1	11	6	29	1

04.09.04 Albania-Greece ... 2-1
04.09.04 Denmark-Ukraine ... 1-1
04.09.04 Turkey-Georgia ... 1-1
08.09.04 Georgia-Albania ... 2-0
08.09.04 Greece-Turkey ... 0-0
08.09.04 Kazakhstan-Ukraine ... 1-2
09.10.04 Albania-Denmark ... 0-2
09.10.04 Turkey-Kazakhstan ... 4-0
09.10.04 Ukraine-Greece ... 1-1
13.10.04 Denmark-Turkey ... 1-1
13.10.04 Kazakhstan-Albania ... 0-1
13.10.04 Ukraine-Georgia ... 2-0
17.11.04 Georgia-Denmark ... 2-2
17.11.04 Greece-Kazakhstan ... 3-1
17.11.04 Turkey-Ukraine ... 0-3
09.02.05 Albania-Ukraine ... 0-2
09.02.05 Greece-Denmark ... 2-1
26.03.05 Denmark-Kazakhstan ... 3-0
26.03.05 Georgia-Greece ... 1-3
26.03.05 Turkey-Albania ... 2-0
30.03.05 Georgia-Turkey ... 2-5
30.03.05 Greece-Albania ... 2-0
30.03.05 Ukraine-Denmark ... 1-0
04.06.05 Albania-Georgia ... 3-2
04.06.05 Turkey-Greece ... 0-0
04.06.05 Ukraine-Kazakhstan ... 2-0
08.06.05 Denmark-Albania ... 3-1
08.06.05 Greece-Ukraine ... 0-1
08.06.05 Kazakhstan-Turkey ... 0-6
17.08.05 Kazakhstan-Georgia ... 1-2
03.09.05 Albania-Kazakhstan ... 2-1
03.09.05 Georgia-Ukraine ... 1-1
03.09.05 Turkey-Denmark ... 2-2
07.09.05 Denmark-Georgia ... 6-1
07.09.05 Kazakhstan-Greece ... 1-2
07.09.05 Ukraine-Turkey ... 0-1
08.10.05 Denmark-Greece ... 1-0
08.10.05 Georgia-Kazakhstan ... 0-0
08.10.05 Ukraine-Albania ... 2-2
12.10.05 Albania-Turkey ... 0-1
12.10.05 Greece-Georgia ... 1-0
12.10.05 Kazakhstan-Denmark ... 1-2

Group 3

GROUP 3 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PORTUGAL	12	9	3	0	35	5	30
Slovakia	12	6	5	1	24	8	23
Russia	12	6	5	1	23	12	23
Estonia	12	5	2	5	16	17	17
Latvia	12	4	3	5	18	21	15
Liechtenstein	12	2	2	8	13	23	8
Luxembourg	12	0	0	12	5	48	0

18.08.04 Liechtenstein-Estonia ... 1-2
18.08.04 Slovakia-Luxembourg ... 3-1
04.09.04 Estonia-Luxembourg ... 4-0
04.09.04 Latvia-Portugal ... 0-2
04.09.04 Russia-Slovakia ... 1-1
08.09.04 Luxembourg-Latvia ... 3-4
08.09.04 Portugal-Estonia ... 4-0
08.09.04 Slovakia-Liechtenstein ... 7-0
09.10.04 Liechtenstein-Portugal ... 2-2
09.10.04 Luxembourg-Russia ... 0-4
09.10.04 Slovakia-Latvia ... 4-1
13.10.04 Latvia-Estonia ... 2-2
13.10.04 Luxembourg-Liechtenstein ... 0-4
13.10.04 Portugal-Russia ... 7-1
17.11.04 Liechtenstein-Latvia ... 1-3
17.11.04 Luxembourg-Portugal ... 0-5
17.11.04 Russia-Estonia ... 4-0
26.03.05 Estonia-Slovakia ... 1-2
26.03.05 Liechtenstein-Russia ... 1-2
30.03.05 Estonia-Russia ... 1-1
30.03.05 Latvia-Luxembourg ... 4-0
30.03.05 Slovakia-Portugal ... 1-1
04.06.05 Estonia-Liechtenstein ... 2-0
04.06.05 Portugal-Slovakia ... 2-0
04.06.05 Russia-Latvia ... 2-0
08.06.05 Estonia-Portugal ... 0-1
08.06.05 Latvia-Liechtenstein ... 1-0
08.06.05 Luxembourg-Slovakia ... 0-4
17.08.05 Latvia-Russia ... 1-1
17.08.05 Liechtenstein-Slovakia ... 0-0
03.09.05 Estonia-Latvia ... 2-1
03.09.05 Portugal-Luxembourg ... 6-0
03.09.05 Russia-Liechtenstein ... 2-0
07.09.05 Latvia-Slovakia ... 1-1
07.09.05 Liechtenstein-Luxembourg ... 3-0
07.09.05 Russia-Portugal ... 0-0
08.10.05 Portugal-Liechtenstein ... 2-1
08.10.05 Russia-Luxembourg ... 5-1
08.10.05 Slovakia-Estonia ... 1-0
12.10.05 Luxembourg-Estonia ... 0-2
12.10.05 Portugal-Latvia ... 3-0
12.10.05 Slovakia-Russia ... 0-0

Group 4

GROUP 4 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FRANCE	10	5	5	0	14	2	20
Switzerland	10	4	6	0	18	7	18
Israel	10	4	6	0	15	10	18
Rep Ireland	10	4	5	1	12	5	17
Cyprus	10	1	1	8	8	20	4
Faroe Islands	10	0	1	9	4	27	1

04.09.04 France-Israel ... 0-0
04.09.04 Rep Ireland-Cyprus ... 3-0
04.09.04 Switzerland-Faroe Islands ... 6-0
08.09.04 Faroe Islands-France ... 0-2
08.09.04 Israel-Cyprus ... 2-1
08.09.04 Switzerland-Rep Ireland ... 1-1
09.10.04 Cyprus-Faroe Islands ... 2-2
09.10.04 France-Rep Ireland ... 0-0
09.10.04 Israel-Switzerland ... 2-2
13.10.04 Cyprus-France ... 0-2
13.10.04 Rep Ireland-Faroe Islands ... 2-0
17.11.04 Cyprus-Israel ... 1-2
26.03.05 France-Switzerland ... 0-0
26.03.05 Israel-Rep Ireland ... 1-1
30.03.05 Israel-France ... 1-1
30.03.05 Switzerland-Cyprus ... 1-0
04.06.05 Faroe Islands-Switzerland ... 1-3
04.06.05 Rep Ireland-Israel ... 2-2
08.06.05 Faroe Islands-Rep Ireland ... 0-2
17.08.05 Faroe Islands-Cyprus ... 0-3
03.09.05 France-Faroe Islands ... 3-0
03.09.05 Switzerland-Israel ... 1-1
07.09.05 Cyprus-Switzerland ... 1-3
07.09.05 Faroe Islands-Israel ... 0-2
07.09.05 Rep Ireland-France ... 0-1
08.10.05 Cyprus-Rep Ireland ... 0-1
08.10.05 Israel-Faroe Islands ... 2-1
08.10.05 Switzerland-France ... 1-1
12.10.05 France-Cyprus ... 4-0
12.10.05 Rep Ireland-Switzerland ... 0-0

Group 5

GROUP 5 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ITALY	10	7	2	1	17	8	23
Norway	10	5	3	2	12	7	18
Scotland	10	3	4	3	9	7	13
Slovenia	10	3	3	4	10	13	12
Belarus	10	2	4	4	12	14	10
Moldova	10	1	2	7	5	16	5

04.09.04 Italy-Norway ... 2-1
04.09.04 Slovenia-Moldova ... 3-0
08.09.04 Moldova-Italy ... 0-1
08.09.04 Norway-Belarus ... 1-1
08.09.04 Scotland-Slovenia ... 0-0
09.10.04 Belarus-Moldova ... 4-0
09.10.04 Scotland-Norway ... 0-1
09.10.04 Slovenia-Italy ... 1-0
13.10.04 Italy-Belarus ... 4-3
13.10.04 Moldova-Scotland ... 1-1
13.10.04 Norway-Slovenia ... 3-0
26.03.05 Italy-Scotland ... 2-0
30.03.05 Moldova-Norway ... 0-0
30.03.05 Slovenia-Belarus ... 1-1
04.06.05 Belarus-Slovenia ... 1-1
04.06.05 Norway-Italy ... 0-0
04.06.05 Scotland-Moldova ... 2-0
08.06.05 Belarus-Scotland ... 0-0
03.09.05 Moldova-Belarus ... 2-0
03.09.05 Scotland-Italy ... 1-1
03.09.05 Slovenia-Norway ... 2-3
07.09.05 Belarus-Italy ... 1-4
07.09.05 Moldova-Slovenia ... 1-2
07.09.05 Norway-Scotland ... 1-2
08.10.05 Italy-Slovenia ... 1-0
08.10.05 Norway-Moldova ... 1-0
08.10.05 Scotland-Belarus ... 0-1
12.10.05 Belarus-Norway ... 0-1
12.10.05 Italy-Moldova ... 2-1
12.10.05 Slovenia-Scotland ... 0-3

Group 6

GROUP 6 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ENGLAND	10	8	1	1	17	5	25
POLAND	10	8	0	2	27	9	24
Austria	10	4	3	3	15	12	15
N Ireland	10	2	3	5	10	18	9
Wales	10	2	2	6	10	15	8
Azerbaijan	10	0	3	7	1	21	3

04.09.04 Austria-England ... 2-2
04.09.04 Azerbaijan-Wales ... 1-1
04.09.04 Northern Ireland-Poland ... 0-3
08.09.04 Austria-Azerbaijan ... 2-0
08.09.04 Poland-England ... 1-2
08.09.04 Wales-Northern Ireland ... 2-2
09.10.04 Austria-Poland ... 1-3
09.10.04 Azerbaijan-Northern Ireland ... 0-0
09.10.04 England-Wales ... 2-0
13.10.04 Azerbaijan-England ... 0-1
13.10.04 Northern Ireland-Austria ... 3-3
13.10.04 Wales-Poland ... 2-3
26.03.05 England-Northern Ireland ... 4-0
26.03.05 Poland-Azerbaijan ... 8-0
26.03.05 Wales-Austria ... 0-2
30.03.05 Austria-Wales ... 1-0
30.03.05 England-Azerbaijan ... 2-0
30.03.05 Poland-Northern Ireland ... 1-0
04.06.05 Azerbaijan-Poland ... 0-3
03.09.05 Northern Ireland-Azerbaijan ... 2-0
03.09.05 Poland-Austria ... 3-2
03.09.05 Wales-England ... 0-1
07.09.05 Azerbaijan-Austria ... 0-0
07.09.05 Northern Ireland-England ... 1-0
07.09.05 Poland-Wales ... 1-0
08.10.05 England-Austria ... 1-0
08.10.05 Northern Ireland-Wales ... 2-3
12.10.05 Austria-Northern Ireland ... 2-0
12.10.05 England-Poland ... 2-1
12.10.05 Wales-Azerbaijan ... 2-0

Group 7

GROUP 7 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SERBIA & M	10	6	4	0	16	1	22
Spain	10	5	5	0	19	3	20
Bosnia-Herz	10	4	4	2	12	9	16
Belgium	10	3	3	4	16	11	12
Lithuania	10	2	4	4	8	9	10
San Marino	10	0	0	10	2	40	0

04.09.04 Belgium-Lithuania ... 1-1
04.09.04 San Marino-Serbia & M'negro ... 0-3
08.09.04 Bosnia-Herz-Spain ... 1-1
08.09.04 Lithuania-San Marino ... 4-0
09.10.04 Bosnia-Herz-Serbia & M'negro ... 0-0
09.10.04 Spain-Belgium ... 2-0
13.10.04 Lithuania-Spain ... 0-0
13.10.04 Serbia & M'negro-San Marino ... 5-0
17.11.04 Belgium-Serbia & M'negro ... 0-2
17.11.04 San Marino-Lithuania ... 0-1
09.02.05 Spain-San Marino ... 5-0
26.03.05 Belgium-Bosnia-Herz ... 4-1
30.03.05 Bosnia-Herz-Lithuania ... 1-1
30.03.05 San Marino-Belgium ... 1-2
30.03.05 Serbia & M'negro-Spain ... 0-0
04.06.05 San Marino-Bosnia-Herz ... 1-3
04.06.05 Serbia & M'negro-Belgium ... 0-0
04.06.05 Spain-Lithuania ... 1-0
08.06.05 Spain-Bosnia-Herz ... 1-1
03.09.05 Bosnia-Herz-Belgium ... 1-0
03.09.05 Serbia & M'negro-Lithuania ... 2-0
07.09.05 Belgium-San Marino ... 8-0
07.09.05 Lithuania-Bosnia-Herz ... 0-1
07.09.05 Spain-Serbia & M'negro ... 1-1
08.10.05 Belgium-Spain ... 0-2
08.10.05 Bosnia-Herz-San Marino ... 3-0
08.10.05 Lithuania-Serbia & M'negro ... 0-2
12.10.05 Lithuania-Belgium ... 1-1
12.10.05 San Marino-Spain ... 0-6
12.10.05 Serbia & M'negro-Bosnia-Herz ... 1-0

Group 8

GROUP 8 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CROATIA	10	7	3	0	21	5	24
SWEDEN	10	8	0	2	30	4	24
Bulgaria	10	4	3	3	17	17	15
Hungary	10	4	2	4	13	14	14
Iceland	10	1	1	8	14	27	4
Malta	10	0	3	7	4	32	3

04.09.04 Croatia-Hungary ... 3-0
04.09.04 Iceland-Bulgaria ... 1-3
04.09.04 Malta-Sweden ... 0-7
08.09.04 Hungary-Iceland ... 3-2
08.09.04 Sweden-Croatia ... 0-1
09.10.04 Croatia-Bulgaria ... 2-2
09.10.04 Malta-Iceland ... 0-0
09.10.04 Sweden-Hungary ... 3-0
13.10.04 Bulgaria-Malta ... 4-1
13.10.04 Iceland-Sweden ... 1-4
17.11.04 Malta-Hungary ... 0-2
26.03.05 Bulgaria-Sweden ... 0-3
26.03.05 Croatia-Iceland ... 4-0
30.03.05 Croatia-Malta ... 3-0
30.03.05 Hungary-Bulgaria ... 1-1
04.06.05 Bulgaria-Croatia ... 1-3
04.06.05 Iceland-Hungary ... 2-3
04.06.05 Sweden-Malta ... 6-0
08.06.05 Iceland-Malta ... 4-1
03.09.05 Hungary-Malta ... 4-0
03.09.05 Iceland-Croatia ... 1-3
03.09.05 Sweden-Bulgaria ... 3-0
07.09.05 Bulgaria-Iceland ... 3-2
07.09.05 Hungary-Sweden ... 0-1
07.09.05 Malta-Croatia ... 1-1
08.10.05 Bulgaria-Hungary ... 2-0
08.10.05 Croatia-Sweden ... 1-0
12.10.05 Hungary-Croatia ... 0-0
12.10.05 Malta-Bulgaria ... 1-1
12.10.05 Sweden-Iceland ... 3-1

Group winners and the two best runners-up qualified for finals. The other six runners-up were paired in three play-off matches (see page 75) for a place in finals

OCEANIA

0.5 finals berths

3rd stage

03.09.05 Australia-Solomon Islands ... 7-0
06.09.05 Solomon Islands-Australia ... 1-2
Australia 9-1 on agg

Australia met Uruguay, the fifth-placed South American team, in the Oceania-South America play-off (see page 75) for a place in finals

SOUTH AMERICA

4.5 finals berths

SOUTH AMERICA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BRAZIL	18	9	7	2	35	17	34
ARGENTINA	18	10	4	4	29	17	34
ECUADOR	18	8	4	6	23	19	28
PARAGUAY	18	8	4	6	23	23	28
Uruguay	18	6	7	5	23	28	25
Colombia	18	6	6	6	24	16	24
Chile	18	5	7	6	18	22	22
Venezuela	18	5	3	10	20	28	18
Peru	18	4	6	8	20	28	18
Bolivia	18	4	2	12	20	37	14

06.09.03 Argentina-Chile ... 2-2
06.09.03 Ecuador-Venezuela ... 2-0
06.09.03 Peru-Paraguay ... 4-1
07.09.03 Colombia-Brazil ... 1-2
07.09.03 Uruguay-Bolivia ... 5-0
09.09.03 Chile-Peru ... 2-1
09.09.03 Venezuela-Argentina ... 0-3
10.09.03 Bolivia-Colombia ... 4-0
10.09.03 Brazil-Ecuador ... 1-0
10.09.03 Paraguay-Uruguay ... 4-1
15.11.03 Argentina-Bolivia ... 3-0
15.11.03 Colombia-Venezuela ... 0-1
15.11.03 Paraguay-Ecuador ... 2-1
15.11.03 Uruguay-Chile ... 2-1
16.11.03 Peru-Brazil ... 1-1
18.11.03 Chile-Paraguay ... 0-1
18.11.03 Venezuela-Bolivia ... 2-1
19.11.03 Brazil-Uruguay ... 3-3
19.11.03 Colombia-Argentina ... 1-1
19.11.03 Ecuador-Peru ... 0-0
30.03.04 Argentina-Ecuador ... 1-0
30.03.04 Bolivia-Chile ... 0-2
31.03.04 Paraguay-Brazil ... 0-0
31.03.04 Peru-Colombia ... 0-2
31.03.04 Uruguay-Venezuela ... 0-3
01.06.04 Bolivia-Paraguay ... 2-1
01.06.04 Uruguay-Peru ... 1-3
01.06.04 Venezuela-Chile ... 0-1
02.06.04 Brazil-Argentina ... 3-1
02.06.04 Ecuador-Colombia ... 2-1
05.06.04 Ecuador-Bolivia ... 3-2
06.06.04 Argentina-Paraguay ... 0-0
06.06.04 Chile-Brazil ... 1-1
06.06.04 Colombia-Uruguay ... 5-0
06.06.04 Peru-Venezuela ... 0-0
04.09.04 Peru-Argentina ... 1-3
05.09.04 Brazil-Bolivia ... 3-1
05.09.04 Chile-Colombia ... 0-0
05.09.04 Paraguay-Venezuela ... 1-0
05.09.04 Uruguay-Ecuador ... 1-0
09.10.04 Argentina-Uruguay ... 4-2
09.10.04 Bolivia-Peru ... 1-0
09.10.04 Colombia-Paraguay ... 1-1
09.10.04 Venezuela-Brazil ... 2-5
10.10.04 Ecuador-Chile ... 2-0
12.10.04 Bolivia-Uruguay ... 0-0
13.10.04 Brazil-Colombia ... 0-0
13.10.04 Chile-Argentina ... 0-0
13.10.04 Paraguay-Peru ... 1-1
14.10.04 Venezuela-Ecuador ... 3-1
17.11.04 Argentina-Venezuela ... 3-2
17.11.04 Colombia-Bolivia ... 1-0
17.11.04 Ecuador-Brazil ... 1-0
17.11.04 Peru-Chile ... 2-1
17.11.04 Uruguay-Paraguay ... 1-0
26.03.05 Bolivia-Argentina ... 1-2
26.03.05 Chile-Uruguay ... 1-1
26.03.05 Venezuela-Colombia ... 0-0
27.03.05 Brazil-Peru ... 1-0
27.03.05 Ecuador-Paraguay ... 5-2
29.03.05 Bolivia-Venezuela ... 3-1
30.03.05 Argentina-Colombia ... 1-0
30.03.05 Paraguay-Chile ... 2-1
30.03.05 Peru-Ecuador ... 2-2
30.03.05 Uruguay-Brazil ... 1-1
04.06.05 Chile-Bolivia ... 3-1
04.06.05 Colombia-Peru ... 5-0
04.06.05 Ecuador-Argentina ... 2-0
04.06.05 Venezuela-Uruguay ... 1-1
05.06.05 Brazil-Paraguay ... 4-1
07.06.05 Peru-Uruguay ... 0-0
08.06.05 Argentina-Brazil ... 3-1
08.06.05 Chile-Venezuela ... 2-1
08.06.05 Colombia-Ecuador ... 3-0
08.06.05 Paraguay-Bolivia ... 4-1
03.09.05 Bolivia-Ecuador ... 1-2
03.09.05 Paraguay-Argentina ... 1-0
03.09.05 Venezuela-Peru ... 4-1
04.09.05 Brazil-Chile ... 5-0
04.09.05 Uruguay-Colombia ... 3-2
08.10.05 Colombia-Chile ... 1-1
08.10.05 Ecuador-Uruguay ... 0-0
08.10.05 Venezuela-Paraguay ... 0-1
09.10.05 Argentina-Peru ... 2-0
09.10.05 Bolivia-Brazil ... 1-1
12.10.05 Brazil-Venezuela ... 3-0
12.10.05 Chile-Ecuador ... 0-0
12.10.05 Paraguay-Colombia ... 0-1
12.10.05 Peru-Bolivia ... 4-1
12.10.05 Uruguay-Argentina ... 1-0

Top four qualified for finals. Uruguay met Australia, the Oceania section winners, in the Oceania-South America play-off (see page 75) for a place in finals

INTERNATIONALS

Sunday, October 23

Oct 23 - Antananarivo - friendly
Madagascar 2 (Randriamalala pen 16, Andriatsima 80)
Mauritius 0
HT: 1-0

Tuesday, October 25

Oct 25 - Al Ain - friendly
United Arab Emirates 2 (Matar 19, Jumaa 68)
Oman 2 (Saleh 60, 85)
HT: 1-0

Wednesday, October 26

Oct 26 - Guadalajara - friendly
Mexico 3 (Salcido 16, D Martinez pen 47, L Perez 53)
Uruguay 1 (Abreu 17)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** Guajardo (Mex)
Mexico: O Sanchez - Mendez (L Perez 46), F Rodriguez, Osorio, Huiqui (Pineda 46), Salcido, Juan P Rodriguez (Lopez 62), D Martinez, Lozano (Osorno 46), Franco, Fonseca (Bravo 63).
Uruguay: Navarro - Godin, Garcia, G Rodriguez, Lima (Melo 82), Pereira (Flores 65), Pouso (Alcoba 74), Nunez (Blanco 63), Liguera (Castro 46), Sanchez (Vazquez 46), Abreu (Granoche 57).

Thursday, October 27

Oct 27 - Manama - friendly
Bahrain 5 (Al-Dikheel 44, Al-Hujairi 82, Abbas 83, Al-Marzooqi 88, Mubarak 90)
Panama 0
HT: 1-0

Sunday, October 30

Oct 30 - Bayamon - friendly
Puerto Rico 1 (Mangeac 67)
Guadeloupe 3 (Gavarin 28, Fautrai 52, Marival 89)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 800

Wednesday, November 9

Nov 9 - Fort-de-France, Martinique - friendly
France 3 (Anelka 49, Cisse 80, Henry 87)
Costa Rica 2 (Saborio 14, D Fonseca 41)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 16,000. **Ref:** Alcala (Mex)
France: Barthez - Gallas, Thuram, Givet (Rothen 72), Abidal (Reveillere 15), Wiltord (Govou 64), Diarra, Dhorasoo, Malouda, Anelka (Cisse 72), Henry.
Costa Rica: Porras - J Drummond, Sequeira, Marin, Wallace (Myrie 64), Centeno, D Fonseca (Azofeifa 80), Hernandez (Bolanos 64), L Gonzalez (C Castro 84), Gomez, Saborio (Ruiz 74).

Friday, November 11

**Nov 11 - Paris - friendly*
Tunisia 2 (Ben Saada 19, Santos 65)
DR Congo 2 (Mputu 16, Lutula 57)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Garibian (Fra)
**Match abandoned after 65mins because of repeated pitch invasions*

Saturday, November 12

Nov 12 - Vitebsk - friendly
Belarus 3 (Korytko 26, Kornilenko 52, 90)
Latvia 1 (Visnakovs 24)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 8,300. **Ref:** Egorov (Rus)
Belarus: Khomutovsky (Zhevnov 46) - Tigorev, Omelyanchuk, Shtanyuk, Lavrik (Cheladinsky 46), Kulchy, Skabara (Kirilchik 46), Kalachov (Suchkov 82), Korytko (V Hleb 72), Bulyga (Kornilenko 46), Kutuzov.
Latvia: Piedels - Isakovs (Karlsons 87), Stepanovs, Zakresevskis, Jemelins (Zirnis 56), Morozs (Solonicins 59), Laizans (Kolesnicenko 72), Astafjevs, Visnakovs (Kalnins 56), Rubins, Verpakovskis (Blanks 70).

Nov 12 - Sofia - friendly
Bulgaria 6 (Yankov 2, 28, Berbatov 35, 47, Todorov 63, pen 90)
Georgia 2 (Jakobia 83, Gogua 90)
HT: 3-0
Bulgaria: Kolev (Linkov 69) - Bozhkov, Domakinov, Karaslavov, Tunchev (Valkanov 57), Georgiev (Karadzhinov 57), Yankov, Stilian Petrov (G Iliev 54), M Petrov (Lazarov 63), Berbatov (Genkov 67), Bojinov (Todorov 56).

Nov 12 - Geneva, Switzerland - friendly
England 3 (Rooney 39, Owen 86, 90)
Argentina 2 (Crespo 34, Samuel 53)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 29,000. **Ref:** Leuba (Swi)
England: Robinson - Young (Crouch 81), Ferdinand, Terry, Bridge (Konchesky 46), King (J Cole 57), Beckham, Lampard, Gerrard, Rooney, Owen.
Argentina: Abbondanzieri - Zanetti, Ayala (Coloccini 74), Samuel, Sorin, Demichelis, M Rodriguez, Riquelme (L Gonzalez 84), Cambiasso, Tevez (Cruz 86), Crespo (Saviola 70).

Nov 12 - Helsinki - friendly
Finland 2 (Sjolund 7, Arkivuo 59)
Estonia 2 (Kruglov pen 62, Lindpere 85)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 1,900. **Ref:** Gilewski (Pol)
Finland: Kaven - Nyman, Kononen, Pasoja, Sjolund (Taulo 85), Roiha (Usimaki 59), Kuivasto, Eremenko, Arkivuo, Haapala, Heikkinen (Makela 59).
Estonia: Kotenko - Saviauk, Stepanov, Jaager, Kruglov, Rahn, Teever (Piiroja 84), Dmitrijev, Neemelo, Lindpere, Terehhov.

Nov 12 - Saint-Denis - friendly
France 0
Germany 0
Att: 58,889. **Ref:** Bennett (Eng)
France: Coupet - Reveillere, Thuram, Boumsong, Gallas, Makelele, Sagnol, Dhorasoo (Diarra 75), Malouda (Rothen 69), Henry (Anelka 46), Trezeguet (Cisse 69).
Germany: Lehmann - Friedrich, Mertesacker, Huth, Jansen, Deisler (Schweinsteiger 46), Frings, Ballack, Schneider (Borowski 76), Klose, Podolski (Kuranyi 83).

Nov 12 - Amsterdam - friendly
Holland 1 (Babel 38)
Italy 3 (Gilardino 41, Vlaar og 45, Toni 50)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Ivanov (Rus)
Holland: Van der Sar (Timmer 46) - Kromkamp (De Jong 60), Mathijsen, Vlaar (Ooijer 60), Van Bronckhorst, Van der Vaart, Landzaat, Cocu (Boateng 87), Castelen, Kuijt, Babel (Vennegoor of Hesselink 82).
Italy: Abbiati - Zambrotta, Cannavaro, Nesta, Grosso, Gattuso, Del Piero, Pirlo (Barone 87), Camoranesi (Diana 79), Gilardino (De Rossi 60), Toni (Iaquinta 68).

Nov 12 - Vaduz - friendly
Liechtenstein 1 (D'Elia 35)
Macedonia 2 (Ilijoski 82, Nuhiji 90)
HT: 1-0

Nov 12 - Coimbra - friendly
Portugal 2 (Petit 32, Pauleta 65)
Croatia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Milton Nielsen (Den)
Portugal: Ricardo - Miguel (Paulo Ferreira 61), Fernando Meira, Ricardo Carvalho, Caneira (Jorge Ribeiro 80), Costinha, Petit (Frechaut 73), Cristiano Ronaldo (Joao Alves 75), Tiago (Helder Postiga 78), Boa Morte, Pauleta (Nuno Gomes 66).
Croatia: Butina - Tomas, R Kovac (Bosnjak 46), Simunic, Srna (Tokic 46), N Kovac, J Leko, Babic, Kranjcar, Prso, Balaban (I Leko 75).

Nov 12 - Le Mans, France - friendly
Romania 1 (Iencsi 52)
Ivory Coast 2 (A Kone 48, B Kone 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 5,377. **Ref:** Fautrel (Fra)
Romania: Lobont - Badoi (Stoican 86), Tamas, Iencsi, Rat (Nesu 80), Paraschiv (Lazar 55), D Munteanu (Bostina 69), Nicolita (Dica 55), Cocis (Rosu 80), Mutu, Mazilu (D Niculae 55).
Ivory Coast: Gnanhouan - Eboue, Blaise Kouassi, K Toure (Kanga 60), Boka, Y Toure (Tiene 46), Zokora, Yapi Yapo, N'Dri (Kalou 72), Drogba (Kouakou 60), A Kone (B Kone 72).

Nov 12 - Glasgow - friendly
Scotland 1 (Webster 37)
United States 1 (Wolff pen 9)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 26,708. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco (Spa)
Scotland: Gordon - Dailly, G Alexander, Weir (G Caldwell 46), Pressley (S Caldwell 46), Webster, Hartley, Quashie (Brown 73), Fletcher, McCann (McFadden 63), O'Connor (Maloney 74).
United States: Keller - Cherundolo, Berhalter, Bocanegra (Conrad 79), Spector, Gaven (Olsen 46), Zavagnin (Quaranta 46), Carroll, Beasley (Pearce 76), Ching, Wolff (Rolfe 57).

Nov 12 - Port Elizabeth - friendly
South Africa 2 (Zuma 8, Nomvete 68)
Senegal 3 (S Camara 3, Kamara 22, Momar N'Diaye 85)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Ndoye (Sen)
South Africa: Vonk (Fernandez 60) - Tau, A Mokoena, Morris, Carnell (Sheppard 46), Pienaar (L Mokoena 62), Evans, Vilakazi, Van Heerden (Mphela 79), Nomvete (Ntuka 79), Zuma.
Senegal: Sylva - Beye, Diatta, Abdoulaye Faye, Ndaw, Kamara (Tall 77), P B Diop, Amdy Faye, Barry (Momar N'Diaye 46), H Camara (Gueye 65), S Camara.

Nov 12 - Seoul - friendly
South Korea 2 (Ahn Jung-hwan 7, Kim Young-chul 52)
Sweden 2 (Elmander 9, Rosenberg 57)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 59,113. **Ref:** Wan (Chn)
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Choi Jin-cheul, Kim Young-chul, Kim Dong-jin, Cho Won-hee, Lee Ho, Park Chu-young (Kim Do-heon 71), Park Ji-sung, Ahn Jung-hwan, Seol Ki-hyeon, Lee Young-pyo.
Sweden: Gustafsson - Ostlund, Risp (Majstorovic 60), Lucic, Dorsin, Linderoth, Alexandersson, A Svensson (D Andersson 72), Hysen, Elmander (Berglund 78), Allback (Rosenberg 44).

Nov 12 - Abu Dhabi - friendly
United Arab Emirates 0
Brazil 8 (Kaka 20, Adriano 52, Fred 57, 84, Lucio 64, Juninho Pernambucano 70, 79, Cicinho 90)
HT: 0-1
United Arab Emirates: Rabea (Abdulla) - Faker, Saeed (Nasib), Masarri, Obaid (Khater), Al-Wehaibi (Abdul Aziz), Jumaa (Saad), Matar, Ali Abbas, H Ali, Khalil (Mubarak). *Sent off: Ali Abbas.*
Brazil: Dida - Cafu (Cicinho 62), Lucio, Juan (Roque Junior 46), Roberto Carlos (Gustavo Nery 46), Emerson (Gilberto Silva 62), Ze Roberto (Edmilson 46), Kaka, Ronaldinho (Ricardinho 60), Robinho (Fred 46), Adriano (Juninho Pernambucano 60).

Sunday, November 13

Nov 13 - Nanjing - friendly
China 0
Serbia & Montenegro 2 (N Djordjevic 50, Zigic 64)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,000
China: Li Leilei - Ji Mingyi, Li Weifeng, Zhang Yaokun, Sun Xiang (Xu Liang 76), Li Tie, Li Yan (Chen Tao 41), Sun Jihai, Shao Jiayi (Zou Jie 68), Cao Yang (Zhao Junzhe 85), Xie Hui (Gao Lin 59).
Serbia & Montenegro: Jevric (O Kovacevic 79) - N Djordjevic, Basa, Jokic, Lukovic, Koroman (N Kovacevic 52), Mladenovic (Ilic 74), Nadj, Vukic (Boskovic 57), Kezman (Ljuboja 46), Milosevic (Zigic 46).

Nov 13 - Barcelona, Spain - friendly
Poland 3 (Klos 2, Smolarek 58, Mila 90)
Ecuador 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Moreno Delgado (Spa)
Poland: Boruc (Dudek 67) - Baszczynski, Klos (J Bak 46), Jop, Michal Zewlakow (Rzasa 46), Kosowski (Rasiak 61), Radomski, Sobolewski, Krzynowek (Mila 81), Smolarek, Frankowski.
Ecuador: Lanza - De la Cruz (Saritama 79), Cortez, Castillo, Ambrossi (Guagua 65), Mendez (Lara 75), M Ayovi, E Tenorio, Valencia (Reasco 56), Delgado, Borja (Calderon 56).

Monday, November 14

Nov 14 - Jeddah - friendly
Saudi Arabia 1 (Al-Temyat 36)
Ghana 3 (Muntari 41, Gyan 45, 72)
HT: 1-2
Ghana: Owu (McCarthy) - Quaye (Ahmed), Edusei (Dickoh), S Kuffour (Dramani), Mensah, Yakubu, Kingston, Obodai (Attram), Gyan, M Amoah (Thechiue-Menson), Muntari.

Tuesday, November 15

Nov 15 - Clairefontaine, France - friendly
Morocco 0
Cameroon 0
Morocco: Fouhami (Bagui 46) - Ouaddou (Fahmi 46), Benaskar, Regragui, Kantari, Kaissi, Kharja (Obbadi 46), Abouchouane (Kacemi 46), Sektioui (Moha 46; Kharbouchi 67), Chamakh (Bouden 60), Zairi (Boussaboun 46).
Cameroon: Souleymanou (Kameni 46) - Geremi (Angbwa 46; A Song 80), R Song, Deumi (Tcheutchoua 85), Ateba (Atouba 46), Wamfor (Feutchine 46), Emana (Djemba Djemba 46), Mbami (Saidou 46), Makoun (Mbia 46), Webo (Douala 46), Boya (Effa 46).

Nov 15 - Belfast - friendly
Northern Ireland 1 (Feeney 53)
Portugal 1 (Craigan og 40)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Webb (Eng)
Northern Ireland: Taylor - Brunt, Murdock, Craigan, Capaldi, Gillespie (Sproule 86), Jones (McAuley 46), Elliott (McCann 46), Davis, Feeney (Shiels 86), Quinn (Thompson 77).
Portugal: Paulo Santos - Paulo Ferreira, Ricardo Carvalho, Fernando Meira, Jorge Ribeiro, Costinha, Petit (Joao Alves 66), Cristiano Ronaldo (Helder Postiga 68), Tiago (Frechaut 76), Boa Morte (Caneira 62), Pauleta (Nuno Gomes 46).

Wednesday, November 16

Nov 16 - Limassol - friendly
Cyprus 1 (C Michael pen 42)
Wales 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 1,000. **Ref:** Jakov (Isr)
Cyprus: Morfis (Georgallides 71) - Okkarides, Lambrou (Louka 79), C Michael, Charalambides, Elia (Theofilou 70), Garpozis, Krassas, Makrides, Okkas, Yiasoumi (Alecou 76).
Wales: Price - Duffy (Edwards 76), Gabbidon, Page, D Collins (Williams 46), Ricketts, Fletcher, C Robinson, Vaughan (Earnshaw 66), Bellamy, Hartson.

Nov 16 - Cairo - friendly
Egypt 1 (Hossam 50)
Tunisia 2 (Gmamdia 55, 57)
HT: 0-0
Egypt: El-Hadary - Fathi (Ghali), Gomaa (El-Nahhas), El-Saqua (El-Tabei), T El-Sayed, A Hassan, Shawky (Barakat), Abd Rabo, Aboutraika, Hossam, Zaki (Hosni). *Sent off: Said 80min.*
Tunisia: Fadhel - Hadj Messaoud (Bousaidi), Mnari, Abdi, Bekri (Ayari), Chedli, Namouchi (Ben Saada), Mrabet, Jemaa (Melliti), Gmamdia, Santos (Ghodhbane). *Sent off: Chedli 80min.*

Nov 16 - Piraeus - friendly
Greece 2 (Giannakopoulos 31, Kafes 90)
Hungary 1 (Kenesei 77)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 12,500. **Ref:** Vink (Hol)
Greece: Nikopolidis (Kotsolis 75) - Antzas, Kyrgiakos, Fissas (Gekas 86), Seitaridis (Vintra 53), Katsouranis, Zagorakis (Kafes 46), Basinas, Giannakopoulos (Kapsis 90), Mantzios (Limberopoulos 46), Salpingidis (Papadopoulos 46).
Hungary: Kiraly - Bodnar, Eger, Gyepes, Balog (Ferenczi 46), Boor (Kenesei 69), Korsos, Rosa, Hajnal (Bojte 90), Halmosi, Torghelle. *Sent off: Torghelle 82min.*

Nov 16 - Geneva, Switzerland - friendly
Italy 1 (Diana 86)
Ivory Coast 1 (Drogba 69)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 18,500. **Ref:** Bertolini (Swi)
Italy: Abbiati (Amelia 72) - Zaccardo (Oddo 46), Barzagli, Materazzi, Grosso (Zambrotta 63), Barone, Pirlo (Gattuso 46), De Rossi (Camoranesi 46), Gilardino (Toni 46), Iaquinta, Del Piero (Diana 46).
Ivory Coast: Boubacar - Zoro, K Toure, Meite, Boka, Yapi Yapo (B Kone 46), Y Toure (N'Dri 72), Zokora, Drogba (Traore 82), Dindane (Kalou 46), A Kone (Abdoulaye 72).

Nov 16 - Tokyo - friendly
Japan 1 (Matsui 90)
Angola 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 52,406
Japan: Kawaguchi - M Tanaka (Matsui 66), Miyamoto, Nakazawa, Komano, H Nakata, Inamoto (Abe 80), Alex, Nakamura, Yanagisawa, Takahara (Oguro 79).
Angola: Joao Ricardo - Jacinto, Alex, Jamba, Delgado, Miloy, Figueiredo (Simao 87), Edson (Santana 89), Maurito (Flavio 69), Mendonca (Ze Kalanga 79), Akwa (Love 62).

Nov 16 - Amman - friendly
Jordan 2 (Salimi 35, Saedi 59)
Georgia 3 (Demetradze 3, 64, S Arveladze 73)
HT: 1-1

Nov 16 - Paris - friendly
Libya 2 (Shebani 25, Erwani 76)
DR Congo 1 (Mbokane 47)
HT: 1-0

Nov 16 - Hesperange - friendly
Luxembourg 0
Canada 1 (Hume 69)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Gomes Costa (Por)
Canada: Stamatopoulos - Pozniak, Hutchinson, McKenna, Jazic (Simpson 59), Sulentic (Peters 64), De Rosario, Imhof (Bernier 46), Brennan, Hume, Ademolu (Johnson 84).

Nov 16 - Houston, USA - friendly
Mexico 0
Bulgaria 3 (Valkanov 4, Bojinov 34, Berbatov 80)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 35,526. **Ref:** Hall (USA)
Mexico: O Sanchez - Salcido, Osorio, F Rodriguez, Rojas, D Martinez (Bravo 46), Pardo, L Perez, Naelson (Juan P Rodriguez 69), Franco, Fonseca (Osorno 46).
Bulgaria: Kolev - Karaslavov (Tunchev 78), Valkanov, Bozhkov, Domakinov, Stilian Petrov (Georgiev 86), Lazarov (Todorov 61), G Iliev, M Petrov (Kamburov 89), Bojinov, Berbatov (Genkov 87).

Nov 16 - Ostrowiec Swietokrzyski - friendly
Poland 3 (M Lewandowski 8, Mila 57, Piechna 87)
Estonia 1 (Teever 68)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,500. **Ref:** Hyytia (Fin)
Poland: Dudek (Kowalewski 46) - Wasilewski, Bosacki (Glowacki 62), M Lewandowski, Adamski, Gorawski, Giza (Dudka 83), Mila, Kaczmarek (Jelen 46), Saganowski (Kazmierczak 73), Brozek (Piechna 46).
Estonia: Poom - Allas, Stepanov (Jaager 15), Piiroja, Kruglov, Teever (Kuresoo 82), Dmitrijev, Lindpere, Reim (Rahn 54), Terehhov, Neemelo.

Nov 16 - Doha - friendly
Qatar 0
Argentina 3 (Riquelme 70, Cruz 72, Ayala 73)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Al-Fadhli (Kuw)
Qatar: Sagr - Koni, Al-Ghanim (Ali 57), Riski, Al-Shammari, Omar, Saleh (Lami 75), Fartoos, Abdulrahman, Yaseer, Basher (Meshal 81).
Argentina: Abbondanzieri - Ayala, Samuel (G Milito 81), Sorin, M Rodriguez, Demichelis (Coloccini 46), Battaglia, Bilos (L Gonzalez 60), Riquelme, Messi (Tevez 81), Saviola (Cruz 60).

Nov 16 - Bucharest - friendly
Romania 3 (D Niculae 16, F Petre 48, Rosu 90)
Nigeria 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 500. **Ref:** Banari (Mol)
Romania: Coman - Stoican (Badoi 86), Tamas, Goian, Rat (Nesu 76), Nicolita (F Petre 46), Lazar (Paraschiv 46), Dica (Rosu 66), Cocis, Bostina, D Niculae (Mazilu 46).
Nigeria: Aiyenugba - Obiefule, Sodje, Mojeem, Adegoke, Kaita, Akwuegbu, Agunbiade (Onu 60), Tyakase, Nosiru, Ledor.

Nov 16 - Seoul - friendly
South Korea 2 (Choi Jin-cheul 4, Lee Dong-gook 72)
Serbia & Montenegro 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 40,127
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Choi Jin-cheul, Kim Young-chul, Kim Dong-jin (Kim Jin-kyu 52), Lee Eul-yong, Kim Jung-woo, Lee Young-pyo, Cho Won-hee, Park Ji-sung, Cha Doo-ri (Chung Kyung-ho 88), Lee Dong-gook (Ahn Jung-hwan 71).
Serbia & Montenegro: Jevric (O Kovacevic 80) - N Djordjevic, Basa, Jokic, Lukovic, Mladenovic (Nadj 76), N Kovacevic (Koroman 46), Vukic (Ilic 76), Neziri (Boskovic 46), Kezman (Ljuboja 46), Milosevic (Zigic 46).

Nov 16 - Damascus - friendly
Syria 0
United Arab Emirates 3
HT: 0-2

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Nov 2
Juventus (Ita) 2 (Trezeguet 62, 85)
Bayern Munich (Ger) 1 (Deisler 66)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 16,076. **Ref:** Michel (Slk)
Juventus: Abbiati - Thuram, Kovac (Camoranesi 58; Mutu 76), Cannavaro, Chiellini, Emerson, Vieira, Del Piero (Nedved 46), Zambrotta, Ibrahimovic, Trezeguet. *Sent off: Ibrahimovic 89min.*
Bayern: Kahn - Sagnol, Lucio, Ismael, Schweinsteiger, Deisler, Demichelis (Scholl 87), Ballack, Ze Roberto, Makaay (Guerrero 88), Pizarro.

Nov 2
Club Brugge (Blg) 3 (Portillo 9, Balaban 25, Verheyen 63)
Rapid Wien (Aut) 2 (Kincl 1, Hofmann 81)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 26,000. **Ref:** Yefet (Isr)
Club Brugge: Butina - Vanaudenaerde, Spilar, Maertens, Blondel, Vermant, Clement, Leko (Roelandts 86), Verheyen, Portillo (Simoes de Oliveira 90), Balaban (Englebert 83).
Rapid: Hedl - Dober (Garics 83), Martin Hiden, Bejbl, Adamski, Hofmann, Korsos, Hlinka, Dollinger (Martinez 70), Kincl, Lawaree (Akagunduz 70).

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	4	3	0	1	8	4	9
Bayern Munich	4	3	0	1	5	3	9
Club Brugge	4	2	0	2	5	5	6
Rapid Wien	4	0	0	4	2	8	0

Sep 14	Club Brugge-Juventus 1-2
Sep 14	Rapid Wien-Bayern Munich 0-1
Sep 27	Juventus-Rapid Wien 3-0
Sep 27	Bayern Munich-Club Brugge 1-0
Oct 18	Bayern Munich-Juventus 2-1
Oct 18	Rapid Wien-Club Brugge 0-1
Nov 2	Juventus-Bayern Munich 2-1
Nov 2	Club Brugge-Rapid Wien 3-2
Nov 22	Bayern Munich-Rapid Wien
Nov 22	Juventus-Club Brugge
Dec 7	Rapid Wien-Juventus
Dec 7	Club Brugge-Bayern Munich

Group B

Nov 2
Thun (Swi) 2 (Lustrinelli 56, Adriano Pimenta 74)
Ajax (Hol) 4 (Sneijder 26, Anastasiou 63, De Jong 90, Boukhari 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 31,340. **Ref:** Hrinak (Slk)
Thun: Jakupovic - Goncalves, Milicevic (Adriano Pimenta 42), Deumi, Orman (Gerber 67), Leandro (Sen 81), Bernardi, Hodzic, Aegerter, Ferreira, Lustrinelli.
Ajax: Stekelenburg - Heitinga, Grygera, Maduro, Emanuelson, Pienaar, De Jong, Galasek, Sneijder (Boukhari 88), Babel, Anastasiou.

Nov 2
Arsenal (Eng) 3 (Henry 23, Van Persie 81, 86)
Sparta Prague (Cze) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 35,155. **Ref:** Sars (Fra)
Arsenal: Almunia - Lauren, Toure, Campbell, Clichy, Pires (Fabregas 73), Gilberto Silva, Flamini, Reyes (Eboue 82), Bergkamp, Henry (Van Persie 67).
Sparta: Blazek - Pergl, Petras, Lukas, Kadlec, Pospech, Petrous (Jeslinek 79), Hasek, Polacek (Slepicka 58), Zelenka, Matusovic.

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	4	4	0	0	9	2	12
Ajax	4	2	1	1	8	5	7
Thun	4	1	0	3	4	8	3
Sparta Prague	4	0	1	3	1	7	1

Sep 14	Arsenal-Thun 2-1
Sep 14	Sparta Prague-Ajax 1-1
Sep 27	Thun-Sparta Prague 1-0
Sep 27	Ajax-Arsenal 1-2
Oct 18	Ajax-Thun 2-0
Oct 18	Sparta Prague-Arsenal 0-2
Nov 2	Thun-Ajax 2-4
Nov 2	Arsenal-Sparta Prague 3-0
Nov 22	Ajax-Sparta Prague
Nov 22	Thun-Arsenal
Dec 7	Sparta Prague-Thun
Dec 7	Arsenal-Ajax

Group C

Nov 2
Barcelona (Spa) 5 (Van Bommel 1, Eto'o 14, 39, 65, Messi 34)
Panathinaikos (Gre) 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 64,321. **Ref:** Temmink (Hol)
Barcelona: Valdes - Oleguer, Puyol, Edmilson, Van Bronckhorst, Xavi (Ezquerro 70), Van Bommel (Gabri 61), Iniesta (Motta 50), Messi, Eto'o, Ronaldinho.
Panathinaikos: Galinovic - Vintra, Biscan (Kotsios 46), Morris, Darlas (Tziolis 61), Flavio Conceicao, Leontiou, Nilsson, Seric (Wooter 79), Gonzalez, Papadopoulos.

Nov 2
Werder Bremen (Ger) 4 (Klose 15, Baumann 24, Micoud 51, 67)
Udinese (Ita) 3 (Di Natale 54, 57, Schulz og 60)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 35,424. **Ref:** Baskakov (Rus)
Werder: Reinke - Owomoyela (Fahrenhorst 68), Andreasen, Naldo, Schulz, Baumann (Vranjes 86), Frings, Borowski, Micoud, Klose, Haedo Valdez (Hunt 80).
Udinese: De Sanctis - Bertotto, Sensini, Felipe, Zenoni (Mauri 50), Pinzi, Obodo, Muntari (Di Natale 30), Candela, Iaquinta, Di Michele (Motta 73).
Sent off: Pinzi 71min.

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	4	3	1	0	11	1	10
Udinese	4	1	1	2	8	9	4
Werder Bremen	4	1	1	2	6	8	4
Panathinaikos	4	1	1	2	2	9	4

Sep 14	Udinese-Panathinaikos 3-0
Sep 14	Werder Bremen-Barcelona 0-2
Sep 27	Barcelona-Udinese 4-1
Sep 27	Panathinaikos-Werder 2-1
Oct 18	Panathinaikos-Barcelona 0-0
Oct 18	Udinese-Werder Bremen 1-1
Nov 2	Barcelona-Panathinaikos 5-0
Nov 2	Werder Bremen-Udinese 4-3
Nov 22	Panathinaikos-Udinese
Nov 22	Barcelona-Werder Bremen
Dec 7	Udinese-Barcelona
Dec 7	Werder Bremen-Panathinaikos

Group D

Nov 2
Lille (Fra) 1 (Acimovic 38)
Manchester United (Eng) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 66,470. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
Lille: Sylva - Debuchy, Tavlaridis, Schmitz, Tafforeau, Bodmer, Makoun, Chalme, Acimovic (Cabaye 76), Dernis (Gygax 79), Moussilou (Odemwingie 84).
Man Utd: Van der Sar - O'Shea, Ferdinand, Brown, Silvestre, Cristiano Ronaldo (Rossi 89), Fletcher, Smith, Richardson (Park 65), Rooney, Van Nistelrooy.

Nov 2
Benfica (Por) 0
Villarreal (Spa) 1 (Marcos Senna 81)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Benfica: Rui Nereu - Nelson, Luisao, Anderson (Nuno Assis 83), Leo, Manuel Fernandes, Petit, Geovanni (Mantorras 70), Karagounis (Joao Pereira 70), Simao, Nuno Gomes.
Villarreal: Barbosa - Javi Venta, Rodriguez, Quique Alvarez, Arruabarrena, Josico, Marcos Senna (Pena 90), Riquelme, Sorin, Jose Mari (Guayre 70), Forlan (Figueroa 50).

GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Villarreal	4	1	3	0	2	1	6
Lille	4	1	2	1	1	1	5
Man Utd	4	1	2	1	2	2	5
Benfica	4	1	1	2	3	4	4

Sep 14	Benfica-Lille 1-0
Sep 14	Villarreal-Manchester United.... 0-0
Sep 27	Lille-Villarreal 0-0
Sep 27	Manchester United-Benfica..... 2-1
Oct 18	Manchester United-Lille 0-0
Oct 18	Villarreal-Benfica..... 1-1
Nov 2	Lille-Manchester United 1-0
Nov 2	Benfica-Villarreal..... 0-1
Nov 22	Manchester United-Villarreal
Nov 22	Lille-Benfica
Dec 7	Villarreal-Lille
Dec 7	Benfica-Manchester United

Group E

Nov 1
Schalke (Ger) 2 (Kuranyi 32, Sand 90)
Fenerbahce (Tur) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 53,993. **Ref:** Medina Cantalejo (Spa)
Schalke: Rost - Rafinha, Bordon, Rodriguez, Krstajic, Ernst (Varela 82), Poulsen, Altintop (Sand 64), Kobiashvili, Lincoln, Kuranyi (Bajramovic 90).
Fenerbahce: Volkan - Serkan, Fabio Luciano, Onder, Umit, Appiah, Selcuk, Marco Aurelio, Nobre (Mehmet 46), Tuncay, Anelka. *Sent off: Fabio Luciano 40min, Marco Aurelio 55min.*

Nov 1
PSV Eindhoven (Hol) 1 (Farfan 12)
Milan (Ita) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 35,500. **Ref:** Poll (Eng)
PSV: Gomes - Ooijer, Alex, Lamey, Afellay (Reiziger 58), Simons, Aissati, Cocu, Beasley, Vennegoor of Hesselink, Farfan (Addo 85).
Milan: Dida - Stam, Nesta, Maldini, Kaladze (Serginho 46), Seedorf, Pirlo, Gattuso (Jankulovski 46), Kaka, Vieri, Gilardino (Shevchenko 74).
Sent off: Stam 84min.

GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	4	2	1	1	2	3	7
Milan	4	1	2	1	5	4	5
Schalke	4	1	2	1	7	6	5
Fenerbahce	4	1	1	2	7	8	4

Sep 13	Milan-Fenerbahce 3-1
Sep 13	PSV-Schalke 1-0
Sep 28	Schalke-Milan 2-2
Sep 28	Fenerbahce-PSV..... 3-0
Oct 19	Fenerbahce-Schalke 3-3
Oct 19	Milan-PSV..... 0-0
Nov 1	Schalke-Fenerbahce 2-0
Nov 1	PSV-Milan 1-0
Nov 23	Fenerbahce-Milan
Nov 23	Schalke-PSV
Dec 6	Milan-Schalke
Dec 6	PSV-Fenerbahce

Group F

Nov 1
Rosenborg (Nor) 0
Real Madrid (Spa) 2 (Dorsin og 25, Guti 40)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 21,270. **Ref:** Stark (Ger)
Rosenborg: E Johnsen - Basma, Kvarme, Riseth, Dorsin (Stensaas 73), Strand (Odegaard 82), Skjelbred, Solli, Braaten, F Johnsen, Storflor (Helstad 65).
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado (Mejia 46), Pavon, Woodgate, Roberto Carlos, Sergio Ramos, Diogo, Beckham (De la Red 90), Guti (Raul Bravo 83), Robinho, Raul.

Nov 1
Olympiakos (Gre) 1 (Babangida 3)
Lyon (Fra) 4 (Juninho 41, Carew 44, 57, Diarra 55)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 33,500. **Ref:** Frojdfeldt (Swe)
Olympiakos: Giannou - Pantos, Kostoulas (Erol 66), Anatolakis, Georgatos, Kafes, Toure, Rivaldo, Babangida, Okkas (D'Acol 81), Djordjevic (Stoltidis 66).
Lyon: Coupet - Reveillere, Cris, Cacapa, Abidal, Govou, Tiago (Clement 75), Diarra, Juninho (Pedretti 78), Malouda (Wiltord 68), Carew.

GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lyon	4	4	0	0	10	2	12
Real Madrid	4	3	0	1	8	5	9
Rosenborg	4	1	0	3	4	8	3
Olympiakos	4	0	0	4	4	11	0

Sep 13	Lyon-Real Madrid 3-0
Sep 13	Olympiakos-Rosenborg 1-3
Sep 28	Rosenborg-Lyon 0-1
Sep 28	Real Madrid-Olympiakos 2-1
Oct 19	Real Madrid-Rosenborg..... 4-1
Oct 19	Lyon-Olympiakos..... 2-1
Nov 1	Rosenborg-Real Madrid..... 0-2
Nov 1	Olympiakos-Lyon 1-4
Nov 23	Real Madrid-Lyon
Nov 23	Rosenborg-Olympiakos
Dec 6	Lyon-Rosenborg
Dec 6	Olympiakos-Real Madrid

Group G

Nov 1
Liverpool (Eng) 3 (Morientes 34, Luis Garcia 61, Cisse 89)
Anderlecht (Blg) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 42,607. **Ref:** Milton Nielsen (Den)
Liverpool: Reina - Finnan, Carragher, Hyypia, Riise, Gerrard (Kewell 78), Xabi Alonso, Sissoko, Luis Garcia, Crouch (Cisse 71), Morientes (Zenden 52).
Anderlecht: Proto - Zewlakow, Juhasz, Tihinen, Wilhelmsson, Vanderhaeghe (Pujol 69), De Man, Goor, Zetterberg, Serhat (Jestrovic 69), Mpenza (Baseggio 81). *Sent off: Jestrovic 75min.*

Nov 1
Betis (Spa) 1 (Dani 28)
Chelsea (Eng) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 55,000. **Ref:** Hamer (Lux)
Betis: Contreras - Varela, Juanito, Nano (Castellini 20), Melli, Joaquin, Rivera, Arzu, Edu, Capi (Fernando 84), Ricardo Oliveira (Dani 25).
Chelsea: Cech - Paulo Ferreira, Ricardo Carvalho, Terry, Gallas, Essien, Makelele, Lampard, J Cole (Wright-Phillips 46), Gudjohnsen (Drogba 46), Robben (Duff 65).

GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	4	3	1	0	6	1	10
Chelsea	4	2	1	1	5	1	7
Betis	4	2	0	2	3	6	6
Anderlecht	4	0	0	4	0	6	0

Sep 13	Betis-Liverpool	1-2
Sep 13	Chelsea-Anderlecht	1-0
Sep 28	Liverpool-Chelsea	0-0
Sep 28	Anderlecht-Betis	0-1
Oct 19	Anderlecht-Liverpool	0-1
Oct 19	Chelsea-Betis	4-0
Nov 1	Liverpool-Anderlecht	3-0
Nov 1	Betis-Chelsea	1-0
Nov 23	Anderlecht-Chelsea	
Nov 23	Liverpool-Betis	
Dec 6	Chelsea-Liverpool	
Dec 6	Betis-Anderlecht	

Group H

Nov 1
Internazionale (Ita) 2 (Cruz pen 75, 82)
FC Porto (Por) 1 (Hugo Almeida 16)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)
Match played behind closed doors
Inter: Julio Cesar - Burdisso, Materazzi, Samuel (Mihajlovic 66), Favalli, Figo, Pizarro, Veron, Wome (Cambiasso 54), Adriano (Cruz 61), Martins.
Porto: Vitor Baia - Bosingwa, Pedro Emanuel, Pepe, Cech, Gonzalez, Jorginho, Paulo Assuncao (Bruno Alves 62), Ricardo Quaresma, Alan (Raul Meireles 46), Hugo Almeida (McCarthy 76).

Nov 1
Artmedia Bratislava (Slk) 2 (Borbely 8, Kozak 59)
Rangers (Sco) 2 (Prso 3, Thompson 44)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 6,527. **Ref:** Meyer (Ger)
Artmedia: Cobej - Petras, Debnar, Durica, Urbanek, Vascak (Tchur 83), Kozak, Borbely, Fodrek, Obzera (Stano 87), Hartig (Halenar 73).
Rangers: Waterreus - Hutton, Kyrgiakos, Rodriguez, Bernard (Murray 90), Ricksen, Ferguson, Hemdani, Lovenkrands, Thompson (Jeffers 70), Prso.

GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter	4	3	0	1	4	3	9
Rangers	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
Artmedia	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
FC Porto	4	1	0	3	7	8	3

Sep 13	Artmedia-Internazionale	0-1
Sep 13	Rangers-FC Porto	3-2
Sep 28	Internazionale-Rangers	1-0
Sep 28	FC Porto-Artmedia	2-3
Oct 19	FC Porto-Internazionale	2-0
Oct 19	Rangers-Artmedia	0-0
Nov 1	Internazionale-FC Porto	2-1
Nov 1	Artmedia-Rangers	2-2
Nov 23	FC Porto-Rangers	
Nov 23	Internazionale-Artmedia	
Dec 6	Rangers-Internazionale	
Dec 6	Artmedia-FC Porto	

Top two from each group qualify for 1st knockout round; third-placed sides enter UEFA Cup

UEFA CUP

Group stage

Group A
Nov 3: Hamburg (Ger) 2 Viking (Nor) 0; Slavia Prague (Cze) 4 CSKA Sofia (Bul) 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hamburg	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Slavia Prague	1	1	0	0	4	2	3
Viking	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Monaco (Fra)	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
CSKA Sofia	2	0	0	2	2	5	0

Group B
Nov 3: Brondby (Den) 2 Maccabi Petach Tikva (Isr) 0; Palermo (Ita) 0 Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus) 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Palermo	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Brondby	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Espanyol (Spa)	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Lokomotiv M	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
M Petach Tikva	2	0	0	2	1	4	0

Group C
Nov 3: Lens (Fra) 5 Halmstads (Swe) 0; Sampdoria (Ita) 0 Steaua Bucharest (Rom) 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Steaua	2	1	1	0	4	0	4
Lens	2	1	0	1	5	4	3
Hertha (Ger)	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Sampdoria	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Halmstads	2	0	0	2	0	6	0

Group D
Nov 3: Litex Lovech (Bul) 2 Grasshopper (Swi) 1; Middlesbrough (Eng) 3 Dnipro (Ukr) 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Middlesbrough	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
AZ (Hol)	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Litex Lovech	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Grasshopper	2	0	0	2	1	3	0
Dnipro	2	0	0	2	1	5	0

Group E
Nov 3: Red Star Belgrade (Ser) 1 Basle (Swi) 2; Strasbourg (Fra) 2 Tromso (Nor) 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Strasbourg	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Roma (Ita)	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Basle	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Red Star B	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Tromso	2	0	0	2	1	4	0

Group F
Nov 3: Heerenveen (Hol) 0 CSKA Moscow (Rus) 0; Levski Sofia (Bul) 1 Dinamo Bucharest (Rom) 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Marseille (Fra)	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Levski Sofia	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Heerenveen	2	0	2	0	0	0	2
CSKA Moscow	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Dinamo Buch'st	2	0	1	1	0	1	1

Group G
Nov 3: Rapid Bucharest (Rom) 2 Rennes (Fra) 0; Stuttgart (Ger) 0 Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr) 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shakhtar	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Rapid Buch'st	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Stuttgart	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
PAOK (Gre)	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Rennes	2	0	0	2	0	4	0

Group H
Nov 3: Bolton (Eng) 1 Zenit St Petersburg (Rus) 0; Sevilla (Spa) 3 Besiktas (Tur) 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolton	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Sevilla	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Zenit	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Besiktas	2	0	1	1	1	4	1
Guimaraes (Por)	1	0	0	1	1	2	0

Teams play all group rivals once; top three from each group qualify for 1st knockout round, where they are joined by the eight third-placed teams from the Champions League group stage

ARMENIA

ARMENIA – CHAMPIONSHIP POOL – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pyunik Yerevan	20	11	6	3	35	15	39
Mika Ashtarak	20	9	8	3	30	16	35
Banants	20	9	6	5	31	27	33
Est'lal-Kotaik	20	8	7	5	22	19	31
Kilikia	20	4	5	11	20	32	17
Dinamo-Zenit	20	2	2	16	12	41	8

AUSTRIA

Oct 22: Austria Wien 0 Rapid Wien 2; Pasching 2 Wacker Tirol 3; Grazer AK 2 SV Ried 2; Mattersburg 3 Admira 1.
Oct 23: Salzburg 3 Sturm Graz 0.
Oct 25: Rapid Wien 3 Grazer AK 2.
Oct 26: Admira 1 Pasching 2; Wacker Tirol 3 Salzburg 0; Sturm Graz 0 Austria Wien 0; SV Ried 3 Mattersburg 2.
Oct 29: Mattersburg 0 Rapid Wien 0; Austria Wien 0 Wacker Tirol 0; Salzburg 1 Pasching 0; SV Ried 4 Admira 0.
Oct 30: Grazer AK 2 Sturm Graz 0.
Nov 5: Admira 0 Salzburg 4; Wacker Tirol 0 Grazer AK 1; Sturm Graz 0 Mattersburg 2; Rapid Wien 2 SV Ried 2.
Nov 6: Pasching 0 Austria Wien 1.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salzburg	18	11	1	6	26	18	34
Austria Wien	18	9	4	5	22	17	31
Grazer AK	18	8	4	6	26	20	28
Rapid Wien	18	7	6	5	30	22	27
Pasching	18	7	6	5	21	14	27
SV Ried	18	5	9	4	27	24	24
Sturm Graz	18	6	6	6	22	24	24
Mattersburg	18	6	4	8	22	28	22
Wacker Tirol	18	4	8	6	19	25	20
Admira	18	2	2	14	21	44	8

BELARUS

BELARUS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shakhtyor	26	19	6	1	59	14	63
Dinamo Minsk	26	15	5	6	50	26	50
MTZ-Ripo	26	16	1	9	43	30	49
Torpedo Z'dino	26	14	5	7	40	25	47
BATE Borisov	26	12	11	3	42	27	47
Dnepr-T'mash	26	12	7	7	48	36	43
FC Gomel	26	12	3	11	34	32	39
Dinamo Brest	26	11	3	12	39	33	36
Naftan	26	10	3	13	43	44	33
Darida	26	7	8	11	30	36	29
Lok Minsk	26	7	5	14	30	43	26
Neman	26	7	3	16	20	50	24
Zvezda-BDU	26	3	5	18	24	60	14
Slavia Mozyr	26	2	5	19	14	60	11

Relegated: Zvezda-BDU, Slavia Mozyr
Promoted: Belshina Bobruisk, Lokomotiv Vitebsk

BELGIUM

Friday, October 21
Standard 1 (Sergio Conceicao 60)
Charleroi 0 Att: 25,000

Saturday, October 22
Cercle Brugge 2 (Pinas 13, Milosevic 39)
Roeselare 2 (Annys 8, Dufoor 38) Att: 5,500

Genk 1 (Sigurdsson 79)
Mouscron 0 Att: 21,108

Gent 3 (Foley 11, Aliyu Datti 44, Boussoufa 83)
Beveren 0 Att: 7,744

Germinal Beerschot 0
FC Brussels 1 (Nicoise 20) Att: 6,000

La Louviere 1 (Potier 79)
Lierse 0 Att: 3,670

Westerlo 1 (Coelho 37)
Lokeren 1 (Bouchouari 52) Att: 5,500

Zulte-Waregem 1 (Salou 69)
St Truiden 5 (Stolica 28, 59, 60, Hajnal 40, Mbonabucya 73) Att: 4,990

Sunday, October 23
Anderlecht 2 (Serhat 35, 50)
Club Brugge 2 (Vermant 46, Verheyen 60) Att: 25,453

Friday, October 28
Lokeren 2 (Joao Carlos 63, Diallo 86)
Anderlecht 2 (Serhat 31, Wilhelmsson 80) Att: 9,271

Saturday, October 29
Beveren 2 (Dissa 72, Zezeto 85)
Zulte-Waregem 1 (Van Nieuwenhuyze 57) Att: 3,500

FC Brussels 1 (De Camargo 31)
Genk 0 Att: 5,000

Charleroi 2 (Sterchele 21, 24)
Westerlo 1 (Utaka 65) Att: 10,701

Club Brugge 2 (Portillo 23, 73)
Gent 1 (Foley 82) Att: 26,544

Lierse 0
Cercle Brugge 4 (Pinas 13, 31, De Smet 16, Dekelver 35) Att: 6,261

St Truiden 1 (Mbonabucya 86)
La Louviere 3 (Stojkov 24, Brahami 61, Potier 65) Att: 7,000

Sunday, October 30
Mouscron 2 (Noukeu 7, Fellahi 54)
Standard 1 (Tchite 46) Att: 7,178

Roeselare 5 (Vaesen 26, Dufoor 37, Eloi 40, 43, Vandamme 69)
Germinal Beerschot 1 (Van der Weerden 73) Att: 5,000

Friday, November 4
Gent 1 (Martens 56)
Lokeren 2 (Drulic 9, 34) Att: 12,257

Saturday, November 5
Anderlecht 3 (Vanden Borre 12, Wilhelmsson 26, Tihinen 49)
Charleroi 1 (Sterchele 24) Att: 24,706

Cercle Brugge 2 (Pivaljevic 11, Boi 21)
St Truiden 1 (Mbonabucya 31) Att: 4,200

Genk 4 (Vandenbergh 1, 89, Defour 26, Engelaar 42)
Roeselare 1 (Soumare 82) Att: 21,167

Germinal Beerschot 4 (Dosunmu 3, 59, 63, Josemar 55)
Lierse 0 Att: 8,000

La Louviere 2 (Fontenette og 11, Jbari 50)
Beveren 0 Att: 3,667

Mouscron 1 (Fellahi 43)
FC Brussels 1 (Nicoise 10) Att: 4,548

Sunday, November 6
Standard 1 (Da Silva Moreira 79)
Westerlo 0 Att: 20,000

Zulte-Waregem 2 (Salou 30, Dupre 80)
Club Brugge 1 (Lange 72) Att: 8,500

Wednesday, November 9
Lokeren 1 (Kristinsson 58)
Lierse 0

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Standard	13	10	1	2	24	12	31
Anderlecht	13	8	5	0	34	12	29
Lokeren	13	7	3	3	19	16	24
Zulte-Waregem	13	7	2	4	24	20	23
Club Brugge	13	6	4	3	18	15	22
Westerlo	13	6	3	4	17	9	21
Genk	13	5	5	3	21	16	20
Gent	13	5	4	4	18	15	19
FC Brussels	13	4	5	4	15	14	17
Cercle Brugge	13	5	2	6	17	19	17
Roeselare	13	4	3	6	21	21	15
Charleroi	13	3	6	4	15	17	15
St Truiden	13	4	1	8	13	18	13
Beveren	13	4	1	8	13	20	13
Mouscron	13	4	1	8	13	20	13
La Louviere	13	3	4	6	14	24	13
Germinal B	13	2	3	8	15	27	9
Lierse	13	1	5	7	5	21	8

LEADING GOALSCORER
11 Mohammed Tchite (Standard)

BULGARIA

Oct 22: Cherno More 3 Pirin 1922 1; Lokomotiv Sofia 3 Naftex 0; Marek 1 Beroe 0; Rodopa 1 Levski 2; Vihren 2 Belasitsa 0.
Oct 23: Botev 0 Lovech 0; Slavia 0 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 1.
Oct 26: CSKA 4 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 3.
Oct 28: Levski 5 Slavia 0.
Oct 29: Belasitsa 4 Botev 1; CSKA 3 Cherno More 0; Lovech 4 Marek 0; Naftex 0 Rodopa 1; Pirin 1922 0 Lokomotiv Sofia 2.
Oct 30: Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2 Vihren 1.
Nov 5: Botev 1 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 1; Cherno More 0 Beroe 0; Rodopa 2 Pirin 1922 1; Slavia 1 Naftex 0.
Nov 6: Lovech 2 Belasitsa 1; Lokomotiv Sofia 1 CSKA 2.
Nov 7: Vihren 1 Levski 2.

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA	11	10	1	0	38	9	31
Levski	11	8	3	0	32	13	27
Lok Sofia	12	8	0	4	22	11	24
Vihren	11	7	0	4	20	18	21
Lovech	11	6	2	3	20	9	20
Lok Plovdiv	11	6	2	3	22	18	20
Cherno More	12	5	1	6	14	15	16
Slavia	11	4	2	5	8	12	14
Beroe	11	3	3	5	13	19	12
Rodopa	12	3	2	7	10	19	11
Belasitsa	11	3	1	7	13	21	10
Botev	11	2	4	5	7	16	10
Pirin 1922	11	2	3	6	9	19	9
Marek	11	2	2	7	8	20	8
Naftex	11	1	2	8	4	21	5

Pirin Blagoevgrad have been demoted to the lower leagues because of failure to pay off debts; results annulled

CROATIA

Oct 22: Osijek 1 Hajduk 1; Slaven 1 Zagreb 0; Varteks 1 Kamen Ingrad 3; Inter 1 Medimurje 3; Pula 3 Rijeka 0; Dinamo 1 Cibalia 0.
Oct 26: Dinamo 3 Osijek 1; Cibalia 4 Rijeka 0; Pula 3 Inter 0; Medimurje 1 Varteks 4; Kamen Ingrad 0 Slaven 0; Zagreb 1 Hajduk 2.
Oct 29: Osijek 1 Zagreb 0; Hajduk 1 Kamen Ingrad 2; Slaven 1 Medimurje 1; Varteks 2 Pula 0; Inter 1 Cibalia 0; Rijeka 0 Dinamo 1.
Nov 5: Rijeka 4 Osijek 1; Dinamo 0 Inter 0; Cibalia 1 Varteks 0; Pula 1 Slaven 0; Medimurje 1 Hajduk 1; Kamen Ingrad 1 Zagreb 2.

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	15	12	2	1	38	4	38
Rijeka	15	8	3	4	26	21	27
Varteks	15	8	1	6	25	21	25
Kamen Ingrad	15	6	4	5	18	18	22
Hajduk	15	5	6	4	22	14	21
Cibalia	15	6	2	7	16	23	20
Osijek	15	6	2	7	16	25	20
Medimurje	15	5	4	6	20	24	19
Zagreb	15	5	3	7	14	19	18
Pula	15	4	3	8	17	21	15
Inter	15	3	4	8	9	23	13
Slaven	15	2	6	7	14	22	12

CZECH REPUBLIC

Oct 22: Zlin 2 Mlada Boleslav 0; Ostrava 1 Jihlava 0.
Oct 23: Olomouc 3 Brno 2; Slavia 4 Sparta 1; Plzen 2 Pribram 1; Chmel Blsany 1 Slovacko 1.
Oct 24: Teplice 0 Liberec 0.
Oct 29: Liberec 2 Plzen 0; Sparta 1 Olomouc 2; Slovacko 1 Teplice 1.
Oct 30: Mlada Boleslav 0 Pribram 0; Most 0 Zlin 0; Jihlava 1 Jablonec 1; Ostrava 0 Chmel Blsany 0.
Oct 31: Brno 1 Slavia 0.
Nov 5: Jablonec 2 Sparta 1; Zlin 2 Brno 0.
Nov 6: Olomouc 3 Chmel Blsany 2; Slavia 2 Slovacko 0; Plzen 0 Jihlava 0; Mlada Boleslav 1 Most 0; Teplice 0 Ostrava 2.
Nov 7: Pribram 2 Liberec 2.

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liberec	12	8	3	1	20	7	27
Teplice	12	7	3	2	18	10	24
Olomouc	12	7	1	4	19	18	22
Slavia	12	6	3	3	22	14	21
Pribram	12	5	4	3	19	14	19
Mlada Boleslav	12	5	3	4	19	18	18
Jablonec	11	5	2	4	18	16	17
Plzen	12	4	4	4	14	14	16
Ostrava	12	4	4	4	12	12	16
Zlin	12	4	3	5	12	13	15
Sparta	12	4	1	7	16	21	13
Jihlava	12	3	4	5	10	17	13
Slovacko	12	2	5	5	11	15	11
Most	11	3	1	7	12	15	10
Chmel Blsany	12	2	4	6	13	25	10
Brno	12	1	5	6	12	18	8

DENMARK

Oct 22: FC Copenhagen 1 Horsens 0.
Oct 23: Brondby 5 Midtjylland 0; Nordsjaelland 4 SonderjyskE 2; Silkeborg 1 OB 0; Viborg 1 Esbjerg 0; AaB 1 AGF 1.
Oct 26: AGF 3 Viborg 3; Esbjerg 0 Brondby 0; Horsens 0 Silkeborg 0; Midtjylland 1 Nordsjaelland 1; OB 0 AaB 2; SonderjyskE 1 FC Copenhagen 4.
Oct 29: Viborg 2 AaB 0.
Oct 30: Brondby 4 AGF 0; FC Copenhagen 2 Midtjylland 0; Horsens 0 OB 0; Nordsjaelland 0 Esbjerg 2; Silkeborg 0 SonderjyskE 1.
Nov 5: Esbjerg 3 FC Copenhagen 1.
Nov 6: AGF 1 Nordsjaelland 3; Midtjylland 0 Silkeborg 2; OB 3 Viborg 0; SonderjyskE 1 Horsens 1; AaB 3 Brondby 0.

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Copenhagen	17	13	3	1	34	11	42
Brondby	17	11	3	3	36	17	36
Viborg	17	10	4	3	33	19	34
OB	17	7	5	5	24	18	26
Nordsjaelland	17	6	7	4	28	20	25
AaB	17	5	6	6	23	22	21
Esbjerg	17	5	4	8	21	26	19
Silkeborg	17	4	5	8	14	25	17
Midtjylland	17	4	5	8	20	32	17
Horsens	17	2	9	6	8	20	15
AGF	17	2	6	9	23	38	12
SonderjyskE	17	3	3	11	21	37	12

ENGLAND

Saturday, October 22
Arsenal 1 (Pires pen 61)
Manchester City 0 Att: 38,189

Aston Villa 0
Wigan 2 (Hughes og 31, Mahon 82) Att: 32,294

Blackburn 2 (Dickov pen 49, Bellamy 81)
Birmingham 0 Att: 18,341

Fulham 2 (John 30, Boa Morte 90)
Liverpool 0 Att: 22,480

Manchester Utd 1 (Silvestre 7)
Tottenham 1 (Jenas 72) Att: 67,856

Portsmouth 1 (Silva 14)
Charlton 2 (Ambrose 61, Rommedahl 77) Att: 19,030

Sunday, October 23
Bolton 2 (Nakata 81, Nolan 90)
West Bromwich 0 Att: 24,151

Everton 1 (Beattie pen 37)
Chelsea 1 (Lampard 50) Att: 36,042

Newcastle 3 (Ameobi 34, 37, Emre 63)
Sunderland 2 (Lawrence 35, Elliott 41) Att: 52,302

West Ham 2 (Sheringham 66, Riggott og 74)
Middlesbrough 1 (Queudrue 87) Att: 34,612

Saturday, October 29
Birmingham 0
Everton 1 (Davies 43) Att: 26,554

Charlton 0
Bolton 1 (Nolan 72) Att: 26,175

Chelsea 4 (Drogba 10, Lampard pen 14, 62, J Cole 75)
Blackburn 2 (Bellamy pen 18, 44) Att: 41,553

Liverpool 2 (Xabi Alonso 18, Zenden 82)
West Ham 0 Att: 44,537

Middlesbrough 4 (Mendieta 2, 78, Hasselbaink 26, Aiyegbeni pen 45)
Manchester Utd 1 (Cristiano Ronaldo 90) Att: 30,579

Sunderland 1 (Whitehead pen 4)
Portsmouth 4 (Vukic 48, Taylor 59, 67, Silva 74) Att: 34,926

Tottenham 1 (King 17)
Arsenal 1 (Pires 77) Att: 36,154

Wigan 1 (Chimbonda 90)
Fulham 0 Att: 17,266

Sunday, October 30
West Bromwich 0
Newcastle 3 (Owen 46, 78, Shearer 80) Att: 26,216

Monday, October 31
Manchester City 3 (Vassell 4, 25, Cole 82)
Aston Villa 1 (Ridgewell 64) Att: 42,069

Saturday, November 5
Arsenal 3 (Van Persie 12, Henry 36, 82)
Sunderland 1 (Stubbs 75) Att: 38,210

Aston Villa 0
Liverpool 2 (Gerrard pen 85, Xabi Alonso 89) Att: 42,551

Blackburn 4 (Emerton 2, Dickov 18, Gamst Pedersen 59, Bellamy 90)
Charlton 1 (Hughes 36) Att: 17,691

Fulham 2 (Malbranque 6, 45)
Manchester City 1 (Croft 20) Att: 22,241

Newcastle 1 (Emre 78)
Birmingham 0 Att: 52,191

Portsmouth 0
Wigan 2 (Chimbonda 48, Roberts 79) Att: 19,102

West Ham 1 (Sheringham 57)
West Bromwich 0 Att: 34,325

Sunday, November 6
Everton 1 (Beattie 16)
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 34,349

Manchester Utd 1 (Fletcher 31)
Chelsea 0 Att: 67,864

Monday, November 7
Bolton 1 (Nolan 32)
Tottenham 0 Att: 26,634

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	12	10	1	1	28	7	31
Wigan	11	8	1	2	13	5	25
Bolton	12	7	2	3	14	11	23
Man Utd	11	6	3	2	16	11	21
Arsenal	11	6	2	3	16	8	20
Tottenham	12	5	5	2	13	8	20
Man City	12	6	2	4	15	11	20
Charlton	11	6	1	4	16	14	19
West Ham	11	5	3	3	15	10	18
Newcastle	12	5	3	4	12	10	18
Blackburn	12	5	2	5	15	15	17
Liverpool	10	4	4	2	9	8	16
Middlesbrough	12	4	3	5	15	16	15
Fulham	12	3	3	6	12	16	12
Portsmouth	12	2	4	6	11	15	10
Everton	11	3	1	7	4	12	10
Aston Villa	12	2	3	7	10	21	9
West Brom	12	2	2	8	9	22	8
Birmingham	12	1	3	8	7	17	6
Sunderland	12	1	2	9	11	24	5

LEADING GOALSCORERS
10 Frank Lampard (Chelsea)
8 Ruud Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd)
7 Darren Bent (Charlton)

ESTONIA

ESTONIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
TVMK	36	30	5	1	138	21	95
Levadia Tallinn	36	28	5	3	97	25	89
Trans Narva	36	23	6	7	99	34	75
Flora Tallinn	36	21	6	9	81	36	69
Tulevik Viljandi	36	12	11	13	46	48	47
Merkuur Tartu	36	11	7	18	52	86	40
Tammeka Tartu	36	8	5	23	50	88	29
Valga	36	8	4	24	38	78	28
Kuressaare	36	7	6	23	40	96	27
Dunamo Tallinn	36	3	3	30	28	157	12

Relegated: Dunamo Tallinn (Kuressaare in play-off)
Promoted: Vaprus Parnu (Ajax Lasnamae in play-off)

FAROE ISLANDS

FAROE ISLANDS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
B36	27	15	9	3	38	17	54
Skala	27	13	11	3	55	30	50
HB	27	15	5	7	66	35	50
NSI	27	14	8	5	58	44	50
EB/Streymur	27	11	10	6	48	35	43
IF	27	6	9	12	32	57	27
KI	27	7	4	16	40	52	25
VB	27	6	6	15	36	57	24
GI	27	6	5	16	35	58	23
TB	27	5	7	15	26	49	22

Relegated: TB
Promoted: B68

FINLAND

FINNISH CUP – Final

Oct 29 - Finnair stadium, Helsinki
FC Haka 4 (Popovich 40, Fowler 50, Innanen 59, Mattila 90)
TPS Turku 1 (Auremaa 83)
HT: 1-0

FRANCE

Saturday, October 22
Lille 2 (Makoun 22, Moussilou 89)
Nantes 0 Att: 11,868

Metz 0
Lyon 4 (Carew 23, Juninho 36, Wiltord 44, Malouda 51) Att: 19,333

Nice 1 (Vahirua 33)
Auxerre 0 Att: 14,000

Paris SG 1 (Kalou 53)
Nancy 0 Att: 40,140

Toulouse 1 (Moreira 41)
Bordeaux 1 (Francia 58) Att: 25,468

Sunday, October 23
Ajaccio 0
Rennes 1 (Frei 41) Att: 5,500

Le Mans 2 (Hautcoeur 2, Matsui 42)
Strasbourg 0 Att: 8,337

Saint-Etienne 2 (Feindouno 22, Hellebuyck 84)
Marseille 1 (Ribery 35) Att: 35,123

Sochaux 2 (Ilan 9, Dagano 40)
Monaco 1 (Maicon 90) Att: 15,028

Troyes 1 (Adam 70)
Lens 1 (Cousin 20) Att: 11,810

Saturday, October 29
Bordeaux 2 (Darcheville 7, 55)
Troyes 0 Att: 19,581

Lens 1 (Cousin 24)
Toulouse 0 Att: 29,174

Lyon 1 (Malouda 54)
Sochaux 0 Att: 40,117

Marseille 1 (Koke 29)
Lille 1 (Acimovic 51) Att: 52,929

Monaco 3 (Chevanton 38, Givet 69, Plasil 76)
Ajaccio 0 Att: 4,000

Nantes 1 (Keseru pen 19)
Le Mans 0 Att: 31,548

Rennes 2 (Utaka 18, Frei 56)
Metz 1 (Tum 90) Att: 24,079

Strasbourg 0
Saint-Etienne 1 (Gomis 72) Att: 23,212

Sunday, October 30
Auxerre 2 (Cisse og 53, Pieroni 86)
Paris SG 0 Att: 18,000

Nancy 0
Nice 0 Att: 17,459

Saturday, November 5
Le Mans 3 (Chiumiento 6, Fanchone 60, Bangoura 77)
Marseille 0 Att: 16,531

Metz 2 (Gueye 59, Djiba 87)
Ajaccio 0 Att: 12,592

Nantes 3 (Da Rocha 27, Signorino 63, Bamogo 69)
Nancy 0 Att: 20,201

Nice 0
Bordeaux 1 (Laslandes 48) Att: 11,386

Saint-Etienne 1 (Hognon 35)
Auxerre 1 (Mignot 81) Att: 33,005

Toulouse 0
Lyon 1 (Govou 9) Att: 28,254

Sunday, November 6
Lille 2 (Odemwingie 6, Lichtsteiner 65)
Strasbourg 0 Att: 13,360

Paris SG 0
Monaco 0 Att: 43,555

Sochaux 1 (Ilan 10)
Lens 1 (Cousin 61) Att: 14,499

Troyes 2 (Jaziri 27, Tourenne 79)
Rennes 1 (Gourcuff 17) Att: 10,103

Friday, November 11
Ajaccio 0
Lens 0 Att: 2,971

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lyon	14	11	3	0	24	8	36
Bordeaux	14	7	6	1	15	7	27
Saint-Etienne	14	6	6	2	15	8	24
Paris SG	14	7	3	4	15	11	24
Lille	14	6	5	3	20	10	23
Auxerre	14	7	2	5	17	17	23
Le Mans	14	6	4	4	16	9	22
Lens	14	4	9	1	19	10	21
Monaco	14	6	3	5	14	11	21
Rennes	14	6	2	6	16	25	20
Nantes	14	5	3	6	13	11	18
Marseille	14	5	3	6	14	18	18
Nancy	14	5	2	7	16	12	17
Nice	14	4	5	5	11	14	17
Toulouse	14	4	3	7	10	16	15
Troyes	14	3	5	6	12	18	14
Sochaux	14	3	4	7	8	15	13
Ajaccio	14	2	6	6	9	16	12
Metz	14	1	4	9	7	24	7
Strasbourg	14	0	6	8	5	16	6

LEADING GOALSCORERS
7 Pauleta (Paris SG)
6 Daniel Cousin (Lens)

GERMANY

Saturday, October 22
Bayern Munich 4 (Ballack 27, Ze Roberto 33, Santa Cruz 59, Pizarro 90)
Duisburg 0 Att: 66,000

Eintracht Frankfurt 6 (Amanatidis 2, Rehmer 8, Chris 28, Kohler 35, Meier 78, Cha 89)
Koln 3 (Streit 5, Podolski pen 54, Alpay 90) Att: 47,800

Hannover 0
Werder Bremen 0 Att: 48,627

Hertha 3 (Marcelinho 6, 34, Pantelic 67)
Mainz 1 (Friedrich 71) Att: 36,392

Monchengladbach 4 (Strasser 11, 86, Wenzel og 32, Kluge 45)
Kaiserslautern 1 (Sanogo 14) Att: 46,092

Nurnberg 2 (Reinhardt 2, Banovic 83)
Arminia Bielefeld 3 (Fink 35, Leon 88, Zuma 90) Att: 20,438

Wolfsburg 0
Schalke 0 Att: 29,046

Sunday, October 23
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Barnetta 56)
Stuttgart 1 (Ljuboja pen 72) Att: 22,500

Borussia Dortmund 1 (Metzelder 58)
Hamburg 1 (Trochovski 73) Att: 75,100

Saturday, October 29
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Kehl 22, Smolarek 89)
Monchengladbach 1 (Neuville 90) Att: 80,100

Duisburg 1 (Bugera 57)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 18,103

Hamburg 1 (Mahdavikia 19)
Schalke 0 Att: 55,800

Kaiserslautern 2 (Engelhardt 32, Goktan 90)
Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Barnetta 39, Voronin 71) Att: 27,468

Koln 1 (Scherz 28)
Bayern Munich 2 (Lucio 54, Ballack 74) Att: 55,000

Stuttgart 3 (Ljuboja 52, Cacau 66, Gomez 83)
Hertha 3 (Cairo 8, Rafael 67, Marcelinho 76) Att: 40,000

Werder Bremen 4 (Frings 29, Borowski 52, 90, Klose 61)
Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Amanatidis 19) Att: 41,085

Sunday, October 30
Arminia Bielefeld 4 (Fink 1, Zuma 53, Boakye 69, 84)
Hannover 1 (Mertesacker 55) Att: 24,986

Mainz 4 (Paulus og 9, Auer 11, Da Silva 45, Thurk 52)
Nurnberg 1 (Kiessling 13) Att: 20,300

Saturday, November 5
Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Juan 33, Kringe og 86)
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Ricken 69) Att: 22,500

Bayern Munich 3 (Schweinsteiger 3, Pizarro 34, Makaay 44)
Werder Bremen 1 (Klose 1) Att: 66,000

Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (Copado 35, Meier 49, 55)
Arminia Bielefeld 0 Att: 33,500

Hannover 2 (Brdaric 86, Tarnat 90)
Mainz 2 (Friedrich 31, Auer 65) Att: 35,433

Hertha 3 (Marcelinho 7, Pantelic 48, Rafael 52)
Kaiserslautern 0 Att: 36,000

Schalke 3 (Kuranyi 13, Meyer og 67, Rodriguez 86)
Duisburg 0 Att: 61,524

Wolfsburg 1 (Klimowicz 42)
Koln 1 (Epstein 88) Att: 20,631

Sunday, November 6
Monchengladbach 0
Hamburg 0 Att: 53,466

Nurnberg 0
Stuttgart 1 (Tiffert 10) Att: 25,860

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	12	10	1	1	27	8	31
Werder Bremen	12	8	2	2	32	16	26
Hamburg	12	7	4	1	19	6	25
Schalke	12	5	6	1	14	7	21
Hertha	12	6	3	3	21	16	21
M'gladbach	12	5	4	3	16	13	19
Wolfsburg	12	4	5	3	13	14	17
Stuttgart	12	3	7	2	15	14	16
B Leverkusen	12	4	4	4	21	21	16
B Dortmund	12	3	6	3	18	17	15
A Bielefeld	12	4	3	5	16	19	15
Eintracht F'furt	12	4	1	7	14	19	13
Hannover	12	2	6	4	16	19	12
Mainz	12	3	2	7	15	19	11
Koln	12	3	1	8	17	26	10
Duisburg	12	2	3	7	12	24	9
Kaiserslautern	12	2	3	7	16	30	9
Nurnberg	12	1	3	8	11	25	6

LEADING GOALSCORERS
12 Miroslav Klose (Werder Bremen)
10 Halil Altintop (Kaiserslautern)
9 Ebi Smolarek (Borussia Dortmund)
8 Ivan Klasnic (Werder Bremen)

GREECE

Oct 22: Iraklis 2 Atromitos 0.
Oct 23: PAOK 6 Ionikos 1; OFI 1 Olympiakos 0; Levadiakos 1 Kallithea 0; Aigaleo 3 Xanthi 2; Akratitos 0 Panionios 1; AEK 3 Panathinaikos 0.
Oct 24: Larisa 4 Apollon 1.
Oct 29: Kallithea 2 Akratitos 0; Apollon 1 Olympiakos 2.
Oct 30: Xanthi 1 Larisa 0; Panathinaikos 1 PAOK 0; Iraklis 2 Levadiakos 0; Ionikos 1 OFI 1; Atromitos 0 Aigaleo 0.
Oct 31: Panionios 0 AEK 2.
Nov 5: Larisa 2 Atromitos 1; AEK 2 Kallithea 0.
Nov 6: PAOK 1 Panionios 0; Olympiakos 2 Xanthi 0; OFI 0 Panathinaikos 2; Levadiakos 1 Akratitos 1; Ionikos 2 Apollon 0.
Nov 7: Aigaleo 1 Iraklis 1.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	9	7	0	2	20	5	21
AEK	9	6	2	1	13	4	20
Xanthi	9	6	1	2	13	7	19
Panathinaikos	9	5	2	2	12	8	17
PAOK	9	4	3	2	15	8	15
Larisa	9	3	3	3	13	10	12
Atromitos	9	3	3	3	10	8	12
Aigaleo	9	2	6	1	7	7	12
Ionikos	9	2	5	2	11	14	11
Iraklis	9	3	2	4	8	11	11
Levadiakos	9	2	4	3	7	9	10
OFI	9	2	3	4	7	13	9
Apollon	9	2	2	5	7	14	8
Panionios	9	2	2	5	8	18	8
Akratitos	9	1	3	5	4	9	6
Kallithea	9	1	1	7	6	16	4

HOLLAND

Friday, October 21
Heracles 0
NEC 2 (Barreto 3, Niedzielan 7) Att: 8,295

Saturday, October 22
NAC 1 (Vonlanthen 61)
Twente 1 (Niemeyer 73) Att: 14,170

RBC 0
Vitesse 3 (Janssen 21, 88, Hersi 64) Att: 4,400

Sparta 2 (De Fauw 7, Cvetkov 85)
Roda JC 3 (Zoontjes og 30, Cisse 64, Oper 70) Att: 8,212

Sunday, October 23
AZ 5 (Sektioui 5, Landzaat pen 41, Perez 52, Meerdink 84, Steinsson 88)
Willem II 1 (Agustien 18) Att: 8,392

Groningen 3 (Buijs 11, 43, Cornelisse 47)
Den Haag 1 (De Graaf 66) Att: 11,740

Heerenveen 1 (Tarvajarvi 90)
Utrecht 1 (Van den Bergh 43) Att: 19,500

PSV 1 (Simons pen 10)
Ajax 0 Att: 34,700

RKC 2 (Martens 32, Teixeira 90)
Feyenoord 1 (Castelen 78) Att: 6,500

Friday, October 28
Ajax 0
Heerenveen 0 Att: 47,500

Saturday, October 29
Den Haag 0
AZ 2 (Sektioui 16, Arveladze 55) Att: 7,185

RKC 4 (Hoogendorp pen 21, Molhoek 55, Van de Haar 85, Martens 89)
NAC 1 (Van Hooijdonk 26) Att: 5,600

Twente 0
PSV 1 (Afellay 70) Att: 13,100

Vitesse 5 (De Mul 14, Hersi 37, 85, Amoah 60, 83)
Heracles 1 (Quansah 18) Att: 17,940

Sunday, October 30
Groningen 1 (Buijs 78)
Roda JC 0 Att: 12,500

NEC 0
Sparta 0 Att: 12,000

Utrecht 4 (Maachi 45, 66, Broerse 58, Fortune 87)
RBC 1 (Kpaka 54) Att: 20,500

Willem II 1 (Denissen 90)
Feyenoord 3 (De Guzman 9, Castelen 21, Paauwe 61) Att: 13,500

Friday, November 4
RBC 1 (Kpaka 42)
RKC 1 (Keller 57) Att: 4,500

Saturday, November 5
AZ 2 (Sektioui 42, Arveladze 56)
Heracles 2 (Calincov 58, Pieckenhagen 90) Att: 8,399

PSV 3 (Farfan 34, 74, Beasley 35)
Sparta 0 Att: 33,300

Roda JC 3 (Sergio 25, Oper 45, Bodnar 84)
NAC 3 (Van Hooijdonk 13, 90, Penders 65) Att: 13,000

Twente 3 (Afonso 47, N'Kufo 58, pen 81)
Willem II 1 (Bobson 69) Att: 13,000

Sunday, November 6
Feyenoord 0
Vitesse 0 Att: 40,000

Heerenveen 4 (Huntelaar 5, 47, Bosvelt 43, Samaras 74)
Groningen 0 Att: 20,500

NEC 1 (Denneboom 46)
Ajax 0 Att: 12,500

Utrecht 1 (Nelisse 51)
Den Haag 1 (Keller og 55) Att: 17,147

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	11	9	1	1	20	5	28
AZ	11	8	1	2	34	13	25
Feyenoord	11	8	1	2	27	11	25
RKC	11	7	1	3	21	13	22
Vitesse	11	5	2	4	19	15	17
Ajax	11	4	3	4	15	12	15
Heerenveen	11	4	3	4	21	19	15
Utrecht	11	4	3	4	16	14	15
NEC	11	4	3	4	12	13	15
NAC	11	4	3	4	15	18	15
Groningen	11	5	0	6	11	16	15
Twente	11	4	2	5	14	11	14
Roda JC	11	4	1	6	18	25	13
Sparta	11	3	3	5	9	15	12
Heracles	11	3	3	5	10	21	12
Den Haag	11	2	3	6	10	19	9
Willem II	11	2	2	7	8	19	8
RBC	11	0	3	8	6	27	3

LEADING GOALSCORERS
12 Shota Arveladze (AZ)
9 Klaas Jan Huntelaar (Heerenveen)
8 Kenneth Perez (AZ)

HUNGARY

Oct 21: Ferencvaros 1 Diosgyor 1.
Oct 22: Sopron 2 Vasas 0; Tatabanya 4 Rakospalota 0; Papa 1 Gyor 4; Honved 1 Ujpest 0; Fehervar 3 Kaposvar 0.
Oct 23: Debrecen 3 Pecs 1; Zalaegerszeg 3 MTK 4.
Oct 29: Pecs 0 Tatabanya 1; Rakospalota 1 Sopron 0; Vasas 0 Ferencvaros 1; Diosgyor 1 Honved 0; Ujpest 3 Papa 1; Gyor 2 Zalaegerszeg 1; MTK 2 Kaposvar 1.
Oct 30: Debrecen 2 Fehervar 0.
Nov 5: Ferencvaros 0 Rakospalota 2; Sopron 3 Pecs 1; Kaposvar 1 Gyor 0; Papa 1 Diosgyor 3; Honved 2 Vasas 2; Fehervar 1 MTK 0.
Nov 6: Tatabanya 3 Debrecen 3; Zalaegerszeg 1 Ujpest 3.

HUNGARY	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fehervar	11	9	0	2	18	5	27
Debrecen	11	7	4	0	24	14	25
Ujpest	11	7	3	1	27	13	24
MTK	10	7	2	1	25	10	23
Gyor	11	5	2	4	18	16	17
Honved	10	4	4	2	15	11	16
Tatabanya	11	4	4	3	17	18	16
Diosgyor	11	4	2	5	10	15	14
Vasas	11	3	4	4	16	15	13
Zalaegerszeg	11	4	1	6	19	19	13
Sopron	11	3	3	5	11	14	12
Ferencvaros	11	2	4	5	14	18	10
Kaposvar	11	2	4	5	8	12	10
Pecs	11	3	0	8	14	21	9
Rakospalota	11	2	1	8	10	24	7
Papa	11	0	4	7	11	32	4

ITALY

Saturday, October 22
Fiorentina 4 (Toni 2, 24, 60, Fiore 36)
Parma 1 (Grella 66) Att: 29,634

Messina 1 (Zampagna pen 28)
Ascoli 1 (Comotto 90) Att: 16,566

Sunday, October 23
Chievo 2 (D'Anna 70, Obinna 72)
Cagliari 1 (Suazo 90) Att: 37,587

Lecce 0
Juventus 3 (Ibrahimovic 9, Mutu 79, Zalayeta 90) Att: 24,941

Livorno 1 (C Lucarelli 87)
Reggina 0 Att: 11,039

Milan 2 (Gattuso 30, Inzaghi 77)
Palermo 1 (Caracciolo 28) Att: 63,115

Roma 1 (Totti 40)
Lazio 1 (Rocchi 57) Att: 61,030

Sampdoria 3 (Flachi pen 38, Volpi 54, pen 90)
Siena 3 (Locatelli 47, Chiesa pen 67, Vergassola 83) Att: 20,925

Treviso 1 (Fava 78)
Empoli 2 (Almiron 25, Tavano 79) Att: 4,903

Udinese 0
Inter 1 (Cruz 36) Att: 19,134

Wednesday, October 26
Ascoli 1 (Fini 18)
Udinese 1 (Vidigal 88) Att: 7,450

Cagliari 1 (Suazo pen 51)
Livorno 1 (Melara 75) Att: 5,000

Empoli 1 (Vannucchi 34)
Milan 3 (Gilardino 45, 50, Vieri 55) Att: 9,014

Inter 2 (Adriano 67, 77)
Roma 3 (Montella 12, Totti 30, pen 47) Att: 50,330

Juventus 2 (Trezeguet 41, Mutu 57)
Sampdoria 0 Att: 29,977

Lazio 2 (Rocchi 31, Oddo pen 90)
Chievo 2 (D'Anna 47, Pellissier 65) Att: 22,622

Palermo 3 (Bonanni 35, Mutarelli 62, Ferri 90)
Lecce 0 Att: 27,084

Parma 1 (Simplicio 36)
Messina 1 (Muslimovic 77) Att: 11,350

Reggina 1 (Missiroli 86)
Treviso 2 (Beghetto 18, Parravicini 78) Att: 9,048

Siena 0
Fiorentina 2 (Toni 2, 67) Att: 15,007

Saturday, October 29
Milan 3 (Seedorf 14, Kaka 26, Pirlo 45)
Juventus 1 (Trezeguet 76) Att: 79,706

Sampdoria 2 (Diana 6, 35)
Inter 2 (Cambiasso 31, Cordoba 40) Att: 27,626

Sunday, October 30
Chievo 2 (Semioli 3, Pellissier 61)
Empoli 2 (Rigano 8, Tavano 53) Att: 17,257

Fiorentina 2 (Toni 53, Jorgensen 82)
Cagliari 1 (Suazo 23) Att: 30,267

Lecce 0
Messina 2 (D'Agostino 80, 83) Att: 11,783

Livorno 2 (C Lucarelli 17, Morrone 28)
Parma 0 Att: 11,453

Reggina 1 (Zauri og 77)
Lazio 0 Att: 9,352

Roma 2 (Panucci 39, Mexes 90)
Ascoli 1 (Domizzi 83) Att: 38,722

Treviso 0
Siena 1 (Chiesa 45) Att: 4,385

Udinese 0
Palermo 0 Att: 16,561

Saturday, November 5
Empoli 3 (Rigano 7, Tavano 67, Vannucchi 90)
Reggina 0 Att: 4,852

Lazio 0
Inter 0 Att: 33,367

Sunday, November 6
Ascoli 0
Fiorentina 2 (Ujfalusi 1, Toni 62)

Cagliari 0
Treviso 0 Att: 10,092

Juventus 3 (Trezeguet 59, Ibrahimovic 60, Del Piero 90)
Livorno 0 Att: 28,897

Messina 0
Roma 2 (Mexes 34, Totti 81) Att: 21,366

Milan 5 (Gilardino 25, 53, Seedorf 37, Pirlo 45, Kaka 77)
Udinese 1 (Di Natale pen 60) Att: 57,942

TEAM OF THE MONTH OCTOBER 2005

HOW THEY VOTED

A BOLA (Por)
Valdes (Barcelona); Nelson (Benfica), Lucio (Bayern Munich), Maldini (Milan), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Ballack (Bayern Munich), Lampard (Chelsea), Juninho (Lyon); Malouda (Lyon), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Toni (Fiorentina)

FANATIK (Tur)
Cech (Chelsea); Thuram (Juventus), Puyol (Barcelona), Lucio (Bayern Munich); Beckham (Real Madrid), Juninho (Lyon), Van der Vaart (Hamburg), Lampard (Chelsea); Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Toni (Fiorentina)

GAZZETTA DELLO SPORT (Ita)
Cech (Chelsea); Reveillere (Lyon), Cannavaro (Juventus), Maldini (Milan), Del Horno (Chelsea); Lampard (Chelsea), Riquelme (Villarreal), Kaka (Milan), Ballack (Bayern Munich), Ronaldinho (Barcelona); Toni (Fiorentina)

SPORT EXPRESS (Rus)
Cech (Chelsea); Cannavaro (Juventus), Terry (Chelsea), Maldini (Milan); Emerson (Juventus), Lampard (Chelsea), Juninho (Lyon), Seedorf (Milan), Ronaldinho (Barcelona); Toni (Fiorentina), Robinho (Real Madrid)

VOETBAL INTERNATIONAL (Hol)
Dida (Milan); Reveillere (Lyon), Cannavaro (Juventus), Maldini (Milan); Ballack (Bayern Munich), Lampard (Chelsea), Kaka (Milan), Ronaldinho (Barcelona); Nuno Gomes (Benfica), Toni (Fiorentina), Klose (Werder Bremen)

DON BALON (Spa)
Cech (Chelsea); Thuram (Juventus), Lucio (Bayern Munich), Maldini (Milan); Emerson (Juventus), Juninho (Lyon), Lampard (Chelsea), Ronaldinho (Barcelona); Eto'o (Barcelona), Drogba (Chelsea), Toni (Fiorentina)

FOOT (Blg)
Cech (Chelsea); Puyol (Barcelona), Lucio (Bayern Munich), Nesta (Milan); Ballack (Bayern Munich), Lampard (Chelsea), Juninho (Lyon), Ronaldinho (Barcelona); Toni (Fiorentina), Trezeguet (Juventus), Wiltord (Lyon)

KICKER (Ger)
Dida (Milan); Puyol (Barcelona), Lucio (Bayern Munich), Maldini (Milan); Lampard (Chelsea), Essien (Chelsea), Carrick (Tottenham), Juninho (Lyon); Drogba (Chelsea), Toni (Fiorentina), Ronaldinho (Barcelona)

TIPS BLADET (Den)
Dida (Milan); Chimbonda (Wigan), Gallas (Chelsea), Lucio (Bayern Munich), Maldini (Milan); Ribery (Marseille), Lampard (Chelsea), Gattuso (Milan), Riquelme (Villarreal); Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Toni (Fiorentina)

WORLD SOCCER (UK)
Dida (Milan); Zambrotta (Juventus), Cris (Lyon), Metzelder (Borussia Dortmund); Juninho (Lyon), Lampard (Chelsea), Pirlo (Milan), Diarra (Lyon); Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Klose (Werder Bremen), Toni (Fiorentina)

Palermo 0
Sampdoria 2 (Gasbarroni 32, Bonazzoli 73) Att: 29,087

Parma 2 (Marchionni 31, Morfeo 50)
Lecce 0 Att: 11,806

Siena 0
Chievo 1 (Pellissier 10) Att: 6,760

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	11	10	0	1	22	5	30
Milan	11	9	1	1	26	9	28
Fiorentina	11	8	1	2	24	12	25
Inter	11	6	2	3	20	10	20
Chievo	11	5	4	2	15	11	19
Roma	11	5	3	3	17	10	18
Livorno	11	5	3	3	11	13	18
Sampdoria	11	5	2	4	21	17	17
Empoli	11	5	2	4	15	15	17
Palermo	11	4	4	3	17	16	16
Lazio	11	4	4	3	13	13	16
Siena	11	4	2	5	18	20	14
Udinese	11	4	2	5	12	16	14
Ascoli	11	2	5	4	11	14	11
Reggina	11	3	0	8	10	18	9
Parma	11	2	3	6	10	19	9
Messina	11	1	5	5	10	17	8
Treviso	11	1	3	7	5	16	6
Cagliari	11	0	5	6	7	17	5
Lecce	11	1	1	9	5	21	4

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Luca Toni (Fiorentina)
8 Emiliano Bonazzoli (Sampdoria)
8 Enrico Chiesa (Siena)
8 Francesco Tavano (Empoli)

LATVIA

LATVIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Metalurgs	28	22	5	1	85	19	71
Skonto	28	17	7	4	59	25	58
Ventspils	28	16	7	5	56	30	55
Dinaburg	28	9	8	11	37	43	35
FK Riga	28	9	7	12	32	46	34
Jurmala	28	9	5	14	37	38	32
Olimps	28	5	4	19	24	68	19
Venta	28	2	3	23	18	79	9

Relegated: Olimps, Venta
Promoted: Dizvanagi Rezekne, Ditton Daugavpils

LITHUANIA

LITHUANIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ekranas	36	29	5	2	87	23	92
FBK Kaunas	36	26	4	6	89	25	82
Suduva	36	16	11	9	67	43	59
Vetra	36	17	6	13	45	45	57
FK Vilnius	36	11	14	11	36	29	47
Silute	36	12	8	16	44	61	44
Atlantas	36	11	8	17	40	52	41
Zalgiris Vilnius	36	11	8	17	40	52	41
Siauliai	36	8	9	19	40	61	33
Nevezis	36	0	5	31	18	115	5

Relegated: Siauliai, Nevezis
Promoted: Alytis Alytus, Gelezinis Vilkas Vilnius

LITHUANIAN CUP – Final

Oct 22 - Vilnius
Vetra 0
FBK Kaunas 2 (Beniusis 102, Poderis 118)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 0-0

NORWAY

Oct 23: Aalesund 1 Lyn 1; Valerenga 0 Rosenborg 2; Tromso 1 Viking 0; Molde 1 Ham-Kam 1; Fredrikstad 1 Lillestrom 1; Brann 2 Odd Grenland 2; Bodo/Glimt 1 Start 1.
Oct 29: Viking 3 Aalesund 0; Start 1 Fredrikstad 3; Rosenborg 1 Tromso 1; Odd Grenland 2 Valerenga 2; Lillestrom 2 Molde 2; Ham-Kam 1 Brann 1; Lyn 6 Bodo/Glimt 0.

NORWAY – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Valerenga	26	13	7	6	40	27	46
Start	26	13	6	7	47	35	45
Lyn	26	12	8	6	37	21	44
Lillestrom	26	12	6	8	37	31	42
Viking	26	12	5	9	37	32	41
Brann	26	10	7	9	43	32	37
Rosenborg	26	10	4	12	50	42	34
Tromso	26	8	10	8	31	30	34
Odd Grenland	26	9	6	11	28	51	33
Ham-Kam	26	8	7	11	31	37	31
Fredrikstad	26	8	7	11	35	44	31
Molde	26	8	6	12	40	46	30
Aalesund	26	6	9	11	30	42	27
Bodo/Glimt	26	6	6	14	29	45	24

Relegated: Aalesund, Bodo/Glimt
Promoted: Stabaek, Sandefjord

NORWEGIAN CUP – Final

Nov 6 - Ullevaal stadium, Oslo
Molde 4 (Friend 25, Konate 65, Berg Hestad 94, Husoy 108)
Lillestrom 2 (Mouelhi 46, Sundgot pen 90)
Aet. **HT:** 1-0. **90mins:** 2-2. **Att:** 25,182.
Ref: Sandmoen

POLAND

Oct 21: Pogon 1 Cracovia 2.
Oct 22: Odra 1 Arka 2; Wisla P 2 Gornik L 1; Amica 3 Gornik Z 1; Groclin 1 Polonia 2; Lech 1 Belchatow 1; Zaglebie 0 Legia 1.
Oct 23: Wisla K 2 Korona 2.
Oct 28: Groclin 3 Lech 1.
Oct 29: Belchatow 3 Wisla P 0; Cracovia 3 Polonia 0; Odra 1 Pogon 0; Legia 1 Korona 0; Gornik L 1 Zaglebie 3; Arka 3 Gornik Z 0.
Oct 30: Wisla K 0 Amica 0.
Nov 4: Lech 1 Cracovia 0.
Nov 5: Korona 1 Gornik L 1; Amica 0 Legia 2; Gornik Z 0 Wisla K 1; Wisla P 2 Groclin 0; Zaglebie 2 Belchatow 1.
Nov 6: Pogon 0 Arka 0.

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wisla K	12	7	4	1	23	11	25
Legia	13	7	4	2	16	7	25
Lech	13	6	4	3	22	21	22
Cracovia	12	6	3	3	14	13	21
Amica	13	5	4	4	20	15	19
Zaglebie	13	5	4	4	23	20	19
Korona	13	4	5	4	20	18	17
Pogon	13	4	5	4	17	16	17
Groclin	13	4	4	5	20	20	16
Odra	12	4	4	4	10	11	16
Wisla P	13	5	1	7	15	24	16
Arka	13	2	7	4	12	13	13
Gornik	13	3	4	6	14	19	13
Belchatow	13	2	6	5	12	18	12
Gornik L	13	1	8	4	10	13	11
Polonia	12	2	3	7	9	18	9

PORTUGAL

Friday, October 21
Belenenses 1 (Meyong 25)
Rio Ave 2 (Milhazes pen 61, Cleiton 69)

Saturday, October 22
Benfica 2 (Karyaka 50, Nuno Gomes 63)
Estrela Amadora 0

Sporting Braga 1 (Madrid 30)
Boavista 0

Sunday, October 23
Academica 1 (Marcel 8)
Uniao Leiria 3 (Ferreira 25, 80, Fabio Felicio 77)

Gil Vicente 2 (Gregory 49, Carlos Carneiro 69)
Sporting Lisbon 2 (Douala 45, Liedson 90)

Maritimo 2 (Kanu 22, Manduca 27)
Naval 1 (Gilmar 76)

Nacional 0
FC Porto 1 (Hugo Almeida 48)

Pacos Ferreira 2 (Edinho 40, 42)
Penafiel 2 (N'Doye 19, 90)

Setubal 0
Guimaraes 1 (Saganowski 36)

Saturday, October 29
Naval 1 (Bruno Fogaca 70)
Benfica 1 (Nuno Gomes 80)

FC Porto 0
Setubal 0

Sunday, October 30
Boavista 2 (Joao Pinto 46, William Souza 55)
Sporting Lisbon 2 (Nani 22, Liedson 25)

Estrela Amadora 0
Nacional 2 (Andre Pinto 42, Alexandre Goulart 75)

Guimaraes 0
Pacos Ferreira 2 (Didi 60, Edson 89)

Penafiel 1 (Bruno Amaro 76)
Academica 0

Rio Ave 2 (Evandro 42, Chidi 43)
Maritimo 2 (Manduca 26, Mancuso 56)

Uniao Leiria 3 (Lourenco 29, 45, Maciel 90)
Gil Vicente 0

Monday, October 31
Sporting Braga 2 (Joao Tomas 19, Sandro og 90)
Belenenses 0

Friday, November 4
Sporting Lisbon 2 (Beto 8, Rogerio 45)
Uniao Leiria 1 (Joao Paulo 54)

Saturday, November 5
Belenenses 1 (Meyong pen 72)
Boavista 1 (Joao Pinto 87)

Maritimo 1 (Kanu 36)
Sporting Braga 0

Sunday, November 6
Benfica 2 (Petit 32, 85)
Rio Ave 2 (Cleiton 24, Chidi 56)

Gil Vicente 2 (Carlos Carneiro 27, Carlitos 56)
Penafiel 2 (N'Doye 52, Bibishkov 60)

Nacional 2 (Anic 70, Alexandre Goulart pen 89)
Naval 0

Pacos Ferreira 0
FC Porto 1 (Ricardo Quaresma 11)

Setubal 1 (Fabio 42)
Estrela Amadora 0

Monday, November 7
Academica 1 (Marcel 14)
Guimaraes 0

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting Braga	10	7	2	1	10	2	23
Nacional	10	6	3	1	12	4	21
FC Porto	10	6	3	1	13	6	21
Benfica	10	5	3	2	17	9	18
Setubal	10	5	2	3	6	3	17
Sporting Lisbon	10	5	2	3	14	14	17
Boavista	10	3	6	1	15	10	15
Rio Ave	10	4	3	3	15	14	15
Pacos Ferreira	10	4	1	5	11	14	13
Maritimo	10	2	5	3	12	13	11
Naval	10	3	2	5	12	14	11
Uniao Leiria	10	3	2	5	11	13	11
Academica	10	3	2	5	9	11	11
Gil Vicente	10	3	2	5	9	13	11
Belenenses	10	3	1	6	13	15	10
E Amadora	10	2	3	5	8	12	9
Guimaraes	10	2	1	7	5	15	7
Penafiel	10	1	3	6	8	18	6

LEADING GOALSCORERS
9 Nuno Gomes (Benfica)
8 Meyong (Belenenses)
6 Marcel (Academica)

ROMANIA

Oct 21: Gloria 2 Bacau 1.
Oct 22: CFR Cluj 0 Poli Iasi 0; Jiul 1 Pandurii 1; National 1 Farul 0; Vaslui 0 Otelul 0.
Oct 23: Arges 1 Poli Timisoara 1; Rapid 0 Steaua 0; Sportul 0 Dinamo 2.
Oct 29: Dinamo 1 Jiul 1; Bacau 0 CFR Cluj 2; Otelul 0 Arges 1; Pandurii 0 Vaslui 0; Poli Iasi 1 Sportul 0.
Oct 30: Farul 1 Rapid 2; Poli Timisoara 2 National 1; Steaua 0 Gloria 1.
Nov 4: Arges 0 Pandurii 1.
Nov 5: National 3 Otelul 2; Poli Timisoara 3 Farul 2; Sportul 2 Bacau 1.
Nov 6: CFR Cluj 1 Steaua 0; Gloria 2 Rapid 1; Jiul 0 Poli Iasi 2; Vaslui 1 Dinamo 2.

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	12	9	2	1	34	9	29
Steaua	12	7	3	2	19	6	24
CFR Cluj	12	6	4	2	17	10	22
Poli Timisoara	12	5	5	2	16	8	20
National	12	6	2	4	11	14	20
Sportul	12	5	4	3	18	11	19
Rapid	12	5	4	3	15	13	19
Arges	12	5	4	3	12	10	19
Poli Iasi	12	5	2	5	9	10	17
Farul	12	5	2	5	16	18	17
Gloria	12	4	3	5	11	16	15
Pandurii	12	3	2	7	8	16	11
Jiul	12	1	6	5	7	14	9
Bacau	12	2	2	8	5	17	8
Otelul	12	1	5	6	7	20	8
Vaslui	12	0	4	8	4	17	4

RUSSIA

Oct 22: Spartak 1 Torpedo 0.
Oct 23: Alaniya 0 Lokomotiv 0; Dinamo 0 Terek 1; Rostov 2 Tom 0; Amkar 0 CSKA 1; Rubin 2 Kryliya Sovetov 1; FC Moscow 2 Zenit 0; Saturn 1 Shinnik 0.
Oct 29: Zenit 0 Rubin 1; Shinnik 1 Spartak 3; Torpedo 2 FC Moscow 0; Lokomotiv 1 Saturn 1.
Oct 30: Tom 3 Dinamo 2; Terek 1 Alaniya 2; Kryliya Sovetov 1 Amkar 0; CSKA 2 Rostov 1.
Nov 6: Terek 0 Lokomotiv 3; Alaniya 1 Tom 2; Dinamo 1 CSKA 2; Rostov 2 Kryliya Sovetov 1; Amkar 1 Zenit 0; Rubin 5 Torpedo 1; FC Moscow 3 Shinnik 2; Spartak 1 Saturn 0.

RUSSIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA	29	17	8	4	44	17	59
Spartak	29	16	7	6	46	25	55
Lokomotiv	29	14	13	2	40	17	55
Rubin	29	14	9	6	43	28	51
FC Moscow	29	13	8	8	34	25	47
Zenit	29	12	10	7	41	24	46
Torpedo	29	11	9	9	35	32	42
Dinamo	29	11	2	16	35	46	35
Shinnik	29	8	11	10	23	29	35
Tom	29	8	10	11	26	33	34
Saturn	29	8	9	12	22	23	33
Amkar	29	7	12	10	24	34	33
Rostov	29	8	7	14	24	37	31
Kryliya Sovetov	29	7	8	14	29	43	29
Alaniya	29	5	8	16	24	49	23
Terek	29	5	5	19	20	48	20

SCOTLAND

Saturday, October 22
Aberdeen 0
Hibernian 1 (Riordan 55) Att: 13,375

Falkirk 1 (Duffy 3)
Dundee Utd 3 (Glennon og 47, Canero 72, Samuel 81) Att: 5,316

Hearts 2 (Skacel 21, Pospisil 23)
Dunfermline 0 Att: 16,500

Livingston 1 (Pinxten 14)
Inverness 1 (Morgan 72) Att: 3,372

Rangers 2 (Burke 1, Lovenkrands 72)
Motherwell 0 Att: 49,215

Sunday, October 23
Kilmarnock 0
Celtic 1 (Petrov 24) Att: 10,544

Tuesday, October 25
Aberdeen 2 (Smith 36, Crawford 43)
Dundee Utd 0 Att: 10,720

Wednesday, October 26
Celtic 5 (Petrov 14, 23, 79, Maloney 17, Nakamura 67)
Motherwell 0 Att: 57,388

Dunfermline 1 (Mason 87)
Hibernian 2 (O'Connor 48, 83) Att: 6,853

Hearts 1 (Jankauskas 35)
Kilmarnock 0 Att: 16,536

Inverness 0
Falkirk 3 (S Thomson 22, Duffy 70, Moutinho 90) Att: 3,660

Livingston 2 (Strong 56, 64)
Rangers 2 (Ferguson 15, Burke 54) Att: 9,481

Saturday, October 29
Dunfermline 0
Motherwell 3 (Kerr 57, Corrigan 62, Hamilton 80) Att: 4,421

Falkirk 1 (Pinxten og 20)
Livingston 1 (Snodgrass 88) Att: 4,786

Hibernian 2 (Beuzelin 78, O'Connor 80)
Hearts 0 Att: 17,180

Kilmarnock 4 (Ford 18, Invincible 19, Boyd 47, 57)
Aberdeen 2 (Anderson 15, Crawford 71) Att: 17,180

Rangers 1 (Thompson 54)
Inverness 1 (Dargo 26) Att: 47,867

Sunday, October 30
Dundee Utd 2 (Sutton og 4, Samuel 30)
Celtic 4 (Hartson 17, Sutton 28, Archibald og 32, Pearson 88) Att: 11,942

Saturday, November 5
Hearts 3 (Hartley 4, Skacel 28, Pospisil 57)
Dundee Utd 0 Att: 16,617

Inverness 2 (Black 5, Proctor 9)
Dunfermline 1 (Makel 73) Att: 3,728

Livingston 1 (Strong 42)
Hibernian 2 (Shiels 83, O'Connor 86) Att: 8,390

Motherwell 2 (McDonald 24, Kerr 54)
Kilmarnock 2 (Boyd 9, 90) Att: 4,979

Rangers 0
Aberdeen 0 Att: 49,717

Sunday, November 6
Falkirk 0
Celtic 3 (Maloney 41, McGeady 42, Hartson 69) Att: 6,459

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	14	11	2	1	38	12	35
Hearts	14	11	2	1	30	9	35
Hibernian	14	10	1	3	26	14	31
Rangers	14	6	5	3	23	13	23
Kilmarnock	14	5	4	5	25	24	19
Motherwell	14	5	3	6	27	30	18
Aberdeen	14	4	5	5	17	17	17
Inverness	14	4	5	5	15	17	17
Dundee Utd	14	3	4	7	16	25	13
Falkirk	14	3	4	7	13	26	13
Dunfermline	14	1	2	11	9	29	5
Livingston	14	0	5	9	7	30	5

LEADING GOALSCORERS
10 Rudolf Skacel (Hearts)
9 Kris Boyd (Kilmarnock)
8 John Hartson (Celtic)

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Oct 22: Buducnost P 1 Borac 1; Habitfarm 0 Hajduk K 0; Jedinstvo BP 1 Rad 4; Obilic 1 Buducnost BD 0; Partizan 2 Vozdovac 3; Smederevo 1 Red Star 3; Zemun 1 Vojvodina 1.
Oct 29: Borac 0 Partizan 2; Buducnost BD 2 Buducnost P 1; Red Star 2 Habitfarm 0; Hajduk K 3 OFK 0; Vojvodina 2 Jedinstvo BP 0; Vozdovac 3 Smederevo 0; Zeta 1 Zemun 0.
Oct 30: Rad 1 Obilic 1.
Nov 2: OFK 0 Zeta 1.
Nov 5: Buducnost P 2 Rad 1; Habitfarm 0 Vozdovac 1; Jedinstvo BP 2 Obilic 1; Partizan 2 Buducnost BD 0; Smederevo 0 Borac 0; Vojvodina 3 Zeta 1; Zemun 2 Hajduk K 2.
Nov 6: OFK 0 Red Star 1.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Red Star	12	10	1	1	33	12	31
Vozdovac	12	8	2	2	27	13	26
Partizan	12	8	1	3	19	8	25
Zeta	12	7	1	4	14	15	22
OFK	12	7	0	5	15	7	21
Vojvodina	12	6	3	3	13	9	21
Hajduk K	12	5	5	2	14	10	20
Zemun	12	5	3	4	14	13	18
Smederevo	12	4	2	6	12	17	14
Buducnost BD	12	4	1	7	7	15	13
Borac	12	3	3	6	11	17	12
Buducnost P	12	2	5	5	12	18	11
Rad	12	3	1	8	13	18	10
Jedinstvo BP	12	3	1	8	10	24	10
Habitfarm	12	2	3	7	5	12	9
Obilic	12	2	2	8	11	22	8

SPAIN

Saturday, October 22
Barcelona 3 (Eto'o 46, 53, Giuly 88)
Osasuna 0 Att: 63,802

Sevilla 2 (Adriano Correia 27, Maresca pen 70)
Alaves 0 Att: 37,700

Sunday, October 23
Cadiz 1 (Enrique 13)
Athletic Bilbao 0 Att: 21,500

Celta Vigo 1 (Silva 81)
Espanyol 0 Att: 15,000

Getafe 5 (Paunovic 8, Guiza pen 21, 25, Pulido 36, Redondo 85)
Zaragoza 2 (Movilla 48, Belenguer og 58) Att: 13,000

Malaga 5 (Salva 7, 30, Fernando Sanz 31, Pablo Counago 63, 73)
Betis 0 Att: 22,000

Racing Santander 0
Atletico Madrid 1 (Maxi Rodriguez 46) Att: 15,331

Real Madrid 1 (Raul 37)
Valencia 2 (Baraja 22, Villa pen 39) Att: 78,000

Real Sociedad 2 (Kovacevic 51, Jauregi 68)
Deportivo La Coruna 0 Att: 21,729

Villarreal 3 (Riquelme 12, Jose Mari 32, Forlan 45)
Mallorca 0 Att: 17,000

Wednesday, October 26
Barcelona 2 (Ronaldinho pen 81, Larsson 88)
Malaga 0 Att: 61,634

Betis 2 (Ricardo Oliveira 27, Javi Venta og 61)
Villarreal 3 (Jose Mari 10, Sorin 59, Riquelme pen 68) Att: 40,000

Deportivo La Coruna 3 (De Guzman 35, Juanma 45, 84)
Real Madrid 1 (Raul 86) Att: 33,000

Mallorca 1 (Doni 47)
Celta Vigo 0 Att: 10,000

Osasuna 3 (Raul Garcia 44, Milosevic 61, Webo 90)
Athletic Bilbao 2 (Gurpegi 26, Clavero og 81) Att: 15,241

Thursday, October 27
Alaves 1 (Sarriegi 12)
Espanyol 1 (Luis Garcia 14) Att: 13,042

Atletico Madrid 3 (Maxi Rodriguez 23, Pablo Ibanez 65, Galletti 87)
Cadiz 0 Att: 30,000

Real Sociedad 3 (Aranburu 4, Nihat 16, Xabier Prieto pen 40)
Getafe 0 Att: 20,636

Valencia 0
Sevilla 2 (Luis Fabiano 19, Ayala og 47) Att: 45,000

Zaragoza 1 (D Milito 35)
Racing Santander 1 (Aganzo 71) Att: 25,000

Saturday, October 29
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Gurpegi 24)
Celta Vigo 1 (Angel 58) Att: 38,000

Betis 0
Real Madrid 2 (Robinho 30, Mejia 79) Att: 45,000

Sunday, October 30
Alaves 0
Cadiz 0 Att: 13,071

Atletico Madrid 1 (Zahinos 5)
Villarreal 1 (Forlan 90) Att: 35,000

Barcelona 5 (Van Bommel 18, Ronaldinho 36, 60, Puyol 75, Larsson 81)
Real Sociedad 0 Att: 81,050

Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Diego Tristan 24)
Getafe 0 Att: 18,000

Mallorca 1 (Victor 34)
Sevilla 1 (Kepa 37) Att: 15,900

Osasuna 2 (David Lopez 28, Inaki Munoz 70)
Espanyol 0 Att: 15,850

Valencia 1 (Albelda 12)
Racing Santander 1 (Aganzo 29) Att: 45,000

Zaragoza 1 (Ewerthon 11)
Malaga 1 (Edgar 40) Att: 28,000

Saturday, November 5
Espanyol 1 (Corominas 88)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Luis Prieto 20) Att: 20,150

Real Sociedad 1 (Xabier Prieto pen 44)
Osasuna 2 (Raul Garcia 33, Cuellar 68) Att: 25,819

Villarreal 1 (Figueroa 23)
Valencia 0 Att: 18,000

Sunday, November 6
Cadiz 1 (Enrique 8)
Mallorca 2 (Victor 27, Arango 83) Att: 20,500

Celta Vigo 2 (Canobbio 26, Jonathan 66)
Alaves 1 (Astudillo 67) Att: 15,000

Getafe 1 (Pernia 89)
Barcelona 3 (Eto'o 2, Giuly 62, Motta 71) Att: 14,000

Malaga 1 (Nacho Perez 51)
Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Valeron 75) Att: 22,000

Racing Santander 1 (Antonito 73)
Betis 1 (Dani 22) Att: 13,808

Real Madrid 1 (Roberto Carlos pen 79)
Zaragoza 0 Att: 75,000

Sevilla 0
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 40,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Osasuna	11	8	0	3	16	11	24
Barcelona	11	6	4	1	27	11	22
Real Madrid	11	7	0	4	22	11	21
Celta Vigo	11	6	2	3	14	11	20
Villarreal	11	5	4	2	18	12	19
Sevilla	11	4	5	2	10	6	17
Dep La Coruna	11	4	5	2	14	12	17
Getafe	11	5	2	4	17	16	17
Valencia	11	4	4	3	15	15	16
Real Sociedad	11	5	1	5	16	21	16
Atletico Madrid	11	4	3	4	11	10	15
Cadiz	11	3	4	4	8	11	13
Malaga	11	3	3	5	15	14	12
Mallorca	11	3	3	5	11	19	12
R Santander	11	2	5	4	6	8	11
Zaragoza	11	1	7	3	12	15	10
Betis	11	2	4	5	8	18	10
Espanyol	11	2	3	6	7	14	9
Alaves	11	1	5	5	9	16	8
Athletic Bilbao	11	1	4	6	11	16	7

LEADING GOALSCORERS
10 Samuel Eto'o (Barcelona)
7 Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
7 David Villa (Valencia)
6 Ronaldinho (Barcelona)

SWEDEN

Oct 23: Assyriska 0 Gefle 3; Sundsvall 3 Orgryte 2; Helsingborgs 0 Hacken 1; Djurgardens 8 Elfsborg 1; IFK Gothenburg 4 Landskrona 2; Kalmar 2 Halmstads 0; Malmo 0 Hammarby 1.

SWEDEN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Djurgardens	26	16	5	5	60	26	53
IFK Gothenburg	26	14	7	5	38	22	49
Kalmar	26	11	10	5	36	21	43
Hammarby	26	12	7	7	43	30	43
Malmo	26	12	5	9	38	27	41
Helsingborgs	26	12	3	11	32	38	39
Elfsborg	26	10	7	9	35	43	37
Hacken	26	11	3	12	29	29	36
Orgryte	26	10	5	11	37	38	35
Halmstads	26	9	5	12	38	38	32
Gefle	26	9	4	13	27	33	31
Landskrona	26	8	6	12	26	44	30
Sundsvall	26	6	7	13	31	46	25
Assyriska	26	4	2	20	17	52	14

Relegated: Landskrona (after play-off), Sundsvall, Assyriska
Promoted: AIK Stockholm, Osters, GAIS (after play-off)

SWEDISH CUP – Final

Oct 29 - Rasunda stadium, Stockholm
Djurgardens 2 (Kuivasto 36, Hysen 89)
Atvidabergs 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 11,613. **Ref:** Hansson

SWITZERLAND

Oct 29: Basle 3 Yverdon 1; St Gallen 0 Schaffhausen 0; Thun 1 Zurich 6.
Oct 30: Grasshopper 1 Young Boys 1; Neuchatel Xamax 2 Aarau 0.
Nov 6: Basle 1 St Gallen 0; Grasshopper 2 Thun 0; Neuchatel Xamax 3 Zurich 5; Young Boys 3 Schaffhausen 1; Yverdon 4 Aarau 1.

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	14	10	3	1	36	18	33
Grasshopper	14	8	3	3	25	15	27
Zurich	14	8	2	4	38	22	26
Young Boys	14	6	5	3	22	16	23
Thun	14	6	2	6	24	26	20
St Gallen	14	5	3	6	21	24	18
Aarau	14	4	3	7	13	25	15
Yverdon	14	4	2	8	20	25	14
Neuchatel X	14	3	1	10	17	30	10
Schaffhausen	14	2	4	8	9	24	10

TURKEY

Oct 21: Trabzonspor 0 Erciyesspor 0.
Oct 22: Ankaragucu 3 Ankaraspor 2; Galatasaray 1 Denizlispor 1; Kayserispor 6 Samsunspor 3.
Oct 23: Gaziantepspor 1 Rizespor 1; Konyaspor 0 Besiktas 1; Malatyaspor 0 Fenerbahce 3; Sivasspor 4 Diyarbakirspor 1; Manisaspor 0 Genclerbirligi 3.
Oct 28: Denizlispor 0 Trabzonspor 1.
Oct 29: Ankaraspor 1 Malatyaspor 2; Fenerbahce 1 Gaziantepspor 0.
Oct 30: Besiktas 4 Ankaragucu 2; Diyarbakirspor 0 Manisaspor 2; Genclerbirligi 2 Galatasaray 1; Kayserispor 1 Konyaspor 0; Rizespor 1 Sivasspor 0; Samsunspor 1 Erciyesspor 1.
Nov 4: Galatasaray 2 Diyarbakirspor 0.
Nov 5: Erciyesspor 2 Denizlispor 0; Trabzonspor 1 Genclerbirligi 1; Gaziantepspor 3 Ankaraspor 3.
Nov 6: Ankaragucu 2 Kayserispor 0; Malatyaspor 1 Besiktas 1; Sivasspor 2 Fenerbahce 3; Manisaspor 1 Rizespor 1; Konyaspor 4 Samsunspor 2.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fenerbahce	12	10	2	0	29	12	32
Galatasaray	12	9	2	1	28	12	29
Kayserispor	12	7	1	4	21	15	22
Erciyesspor	12	5	6	1	14	8	21
Sivasspor	12	6	3	3	14	10	21
Besiktas	12	5	4	3	16	12	19
Gaziantepspor	12	4	5	3	17	17	17
Trabzonspor	12	4	4	4	13	15	16
Genclerbirligi	12	3	6	3	11	10	15
Ankaragucu	12	4	3	5	17	17	15
Konyaspor	12	3	5	4	15	13	14
Manisaspor	12	3	4	5	16	17	13
Rizespor	12	3	4	5	9	12	13
Ankaraspor	12	2	6	4	16	17	12
Samsunspor	12	2	3	7	23	32	9
Diyarbakirspor	12	2	2	8	10	26	8
Denizlispor	12	1	4	7	6	15	7
Malatyaspor	12	1	4	7	9	24	7

UKRAINE

Oct 23: Stal 1 Zakarpattya 0; Arsenal 0 Illichivets 2; Metalurh Z 0 Vorskla 2; Shakhtar 2 Metalurh D 0; Tavriya 1 Chornomorets 1; Kryvbas 0 Dynamo 1; FC Kharkiv 3 Volyn 2; Dnipro 0 Metalist 0.
Oct 30: Metalist 4 Zakarpattya 1; Dnipro 2 FC Kharkiv 0; Volyn 3 Kryvbas 0; Dynamo 2 Tavriya 0; Chornomorets 0 Shakhtar 1; Metalurh D 0 Metalurh Z 0; Vorskla 2 Arsenal 0; Illichivets 3 Stal 0.
Nov 5: Zakarpattya 1 Illichivets 1; Metalurh Z 1 Chornomorets 0; FC Kharkiv 1 Metalist 0.
Nov 6: Stal 2 Vorskla 0; Arsenal 0 Metalurh D 2; Tavriya 1 Volyn 2.
Nov 7: Shakhtar 0 Dynamo 1; Kryvbas 2 Dnipro 2.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dynamo	15	12	3	0	35	7	39
Shakhtar	15	12	2	1	33	6	38
Volyn	15	8	2	5	24	26	26
Illichivets	15	7	4	4	16	16	25
Chornomorets	15	7	3	5	20	13	24
Metalurh D	15	6	6	3	21	11	24
Metalist	15	7	2	6	21	23	23
FC Kharkiv	15	6	3	6	22	19	21
Stal	15	4	5	6	11	21	17
Dnipro	15	4	4	7	13	17	16
Vorskla	15	4	4	7	14	21	16
Tavriya	15	4	2	9	12	21	14
Kryvbas	15	3	5	7	10	15	14
Arsenal	15	3	5	7	12	21	14
Metalurh Z	15	3	4	8	15	25	13
Zakarpattya	15	1	4	10	7	24	7

SOUTH AMERICA

SUDAMERICANA CUP

Last 16

America (Mex) v Atletico Nacional (Col)
3-3, 4-1 (agg 7-4)
Cerro Porteno (Par) v Boca Juniors (Arg)
2-2, 1-5 (agg 3-7)
Corinthians (Bra) v River Plate (Arg)
0-0, 1-1 (agg 1-1; Corinthians on away goals)
DC United (USA) v Universidad Catolica (Chl)
1-1, 2-3 (agg 3-4)
Fluminense (Bra) v Banfield (Arg)
3-1, 0-0 (agg 3-1)
Pumas UNAM (Mex) v The Strongest (Bol)
3-1, 1-2 (agg 4-3)
Rosario Central (Arg) v Internacional (Bra)
0-1, 1-1 (agg 1-2)
Velez Sarsfield (Arg) v Cruzeiro (Bra)
2-0, 1-2 (agg 3-2)

Quarter-finals

America v Velez Sarsfield
0-2, 0-2 (agg 0-4)
Corinthians v Pumas UNAM
2-1, 0-3 (agg 2-4)
Fluminense v Universidad Catolica
2-1, 0-2 (agg 2-3)
Internacional v Boca Juniors
1-0, 1-4 (agg 2-4)

Semi-finals draw

Boca Juniors v Universidad Catolica
Velez Sarsfield v Pumas UNAM

ARGENTINA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, October 21
Estudiantes 3 (Calderon 4, 25, Sosa 67)
Arsenal 1 (Esmerado 56)

Independiente 1 (Aguero 48)
Colon Santa Fe 1 (Fuertes 46)

Lanus 0
Tiro Federal 2 (Aquino pen 29, Campora 68)

Olimpo 2 (Maggiolo 32, Barraza og 64)
Banfield 2 (Mendoza 17, Paletta 46)

Friday, October 28
Argentinos Juniors 0
Gimnasia LP 1 (Fleitas og 47)

Saturday, October 29
Boca Juniors 2 (Insua 33, Palacio 70)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Belluschi 45)

Sunday, October 30
Gimnasia J 1 (Sosa 59)
Velez Sarsfield 2 (Centurion pen 52, Berza og 81)

Instituto 0
Quilmes 0

Rosario Central 0
River Plate 3 (Gallardo pen 16, Dominguez 28, Farias pen 50)

San Lorenzo 2 (Lavezzi 63, Montero 71)
Racing Club 1 (Villanueva 52)

Sunday, November 6
Newell's Old Boys 2 (Ortega pen 54, Garay 71)
Rosario Central 1 (Rivarola 45)

Velez Sarsfield 0
Estudiantes 2 (Alayes 35, Arano 90)

Monday, November 7
Banfield 1 (Sand 76)
Boca Juniors 1 (Palacio 81)

Tuesday, November 8
Arsenal 2 (Raymonda 41, Caffa 71)
Independiente 4 (Armenteros 47, Orteman 59, Caggiano 74, Aguero 86)

Colon Santa Fe 2 (Denis 11, Fuertes 82)
Olimpo 0

Gimnasia LP 4 (Goux 3, Gonzalez 33, Delorte 55, Vargas 90)
Gimnasia J 1 (Silva 84)

Wednesday, November 9
Quilmes 2 (Turdo 18, 28)
San Lorenzo 0

Racing Club 3 (Villanueva 6, Grabinski 37, Pareja og 39)
Argentinos Juniors 0

River Plate 4 (Garcia 2, 73, Farias 19, Montenegro 90)
Lanus 1 (Graf 9)

Tiro Federal 2 (De Bruno 4, Campora 40)
Instituto 1 (Arrieta 48)

Friday, November 11
Rosario Central 0
Banfield 0

Saturday, November 12
Argentinos Juniors 1 (Kaviedes pen 39)
Quilmes 2 (Caneo pen 59, 87)

Gimnasia J 0
Estudiantes 1 (Calderon 34)

Gimnasia LP 3 (Gonzalez 23, Lobos 36, Vargas 70)
Racing Club 1 (Capria 45)

Sunday, November 13
Boca Juniors 0
Colon Santa Fe 1 (Moreno y Fabianesi 82)

Independiente 1 (Pusineri 20)
Velez Sarsfield 0

Instituto 1 (Arrieta 20)
River Plate 4 (Farias 37, 51, 60, Gallardo 86)

Lanus 1 (Archubi 66)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Scocco 44)

Olimpo 0
Arsenal 0

San Lorenzo 5 (Bottinelli 19, Lavezzi 28, 48, Saja pen 60, pen 65)
Tiro Federal 3 (Aquino 24, Campora 57, Fermani 89)

Tuesday, November 15
Quilmes 0
Gimnasia LP 1 (Lobos pen 85)

Racing Club 3 (Romero 13, Crosa 20, Capria 58)
Gimnasia J 3 (Silva 7, 90, Quinteros 53)

Wednesday, November 16
Banfield 1 (Mendoza 4)
Lanus 1 (Archubi 52)

Estudiantes 1 (Carrusca 62)
Independiente 1 (Bustos Montoya 10)

Newell's Old Boys 5 (Belluschi 8, 17, 31, Ortega 60, Scocco 72)
Instituto 0

Thursday, November 17
Arsenal 4 (S Gonzalez 2, 29, Caffa 51, P Gonzalez 65)
Boca Juniors 1 (Insua 34)

Colon Santa Fe 2 (Moreno y Fabianesi 2, Hernandez 51)
Rosario Central 0

River Plate 5 (Gallardo pen 2, 7, Talamonti 44, Garcia 86, 90)
San Lorenzo 1 (Pereyra 47)

Tiro Federal 1 (Campora 30)
Argentinos Juniors 4 (Pisculichi 23, pen 44, 46, 59)

Velez Sarsfield 2 (Gracian 3, Zarate 21)
Olimpo 0

ARGENTINA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gimnasia LP	15	10	1	4	23	16	31
Velez Sarsfield	15	9	2	4	20	10	29
Boca Juniors	15	8	4	3	27	15	28
Independiente	15	7	6	2	27	17	27
River Plate	15	8	2	5	28	16	26
Estudiantes	15	8	2	5	19	13	26
Argentinos Jnrs	15	7	3	5	17	14	24
Banfield	15	4	10	1	18	13	22
San Lorenzo	15	6	4	5	26	27	22
Olimpo	15	4	8	3	14	15	20
Colon Santa Fe	15	5	4	6	20	22	19
Arsenal	15	4	6	5	18	19	18
Quilmes	15	4	5	6	15	18	17
Newell's OB	15	4	4	7	20	22	16
Lanus	15	3	7	5	14	23	16
Rosario Central	15	4	4	7	14	25	16
Racing Club	15	4	3	8	20	24	15
Gimnasia J	15	2	6	7	18	26	12
Instituto	15	2	6	7	8	22	12
Tiro Federal	15	3	1	11	18	27	10

LEADING GOALSCORER
10 Javier Campora (Tiro Federal)

BOLIVIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP
Regular season

Oct 22: La Paz 3 Iberoamericana 1.
Oct 23: San Jose 2 Real Potosi 1; Jorge Wilstermann 1 Aurora 2; The Strongest 2 Bolivar 2; Union Central 3 Destroyers 1; Blooming 2 Oriente 1.
Oct 26: Bolivar 3 La Paz 1; Destroyers 0 Jorge Wilstermann 0; Iberoamericana 1 Blooming 7; Real Potosi 2 Aurora 2; San Jose 0 The Strongest 3.
Oct 27: Oriente 2 Union Central 1.
Oct 29: The Strongest 6 Iberoamericana 1.
Oct 30: Jorge Wilstermann 0 San Jose 1; Blooming 3 Destroyers 0; Real Potosi 2 Bolivar 2; La Paz 3 Oriente 0; Union Central 1 Aurora 2.
Nov 2: Destroyers 3 San Jose 2; Real Potosi 6 Union Central 0.
Nov 3: Bolivar 4 Oriente 0; Aurora 3 La Paz 0; Iberoamericana 0 Jorge Wilstermann 6; Blooming 0 The Strongest 0.
Nov 5: San Jose 4 Iberoamericana 0.
Nov 6: The Strongest 6 Destroyers 0; Jorge Wilstermann 1 Blooming 2; Union Central 2 Bolivar 3; La Paz 0 Real Potosi 0; Oriente 1 Aurora 0.

BOLIVIA – OPENING – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blooming	12	8	2	2	34	13	26
San Jose	12	7	1	4	22	17	22
The Strongest	12	6	3	3	22	10	21
J Wilstermann	12	5	2	5	21	13	17
Destroyers	12	5	1	6	26	26	16
Iberoamericana	12	0	0	12	6	52	0

GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolivar	12	9	3	0	32	13	30
La Paz	12	5	4	3	17	15	19
Oriente	12	5	3	4	15	17	18
Real Potosi	12	2	6	4	20	19	12
Aurora	12	2	4	6	11	15	10
Union Central	12	3	1	8	14	30	10

Top three from each group qualified for play-offs

Play-offs

Nov 12: San Jose 1 Blooming 1.
Nov 13: The Strongest 1 La Paz 2; Oriente 2 Bolivar 1.
Nov 16: La Paz 3 Oriente 1; Blooming 4 The Strongest 1.
Nov 17: Bolivar 1 San Jose 1.

OPENING PLAY-OFFS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
La Paz	2	2	0	0	5	2	6
Blooming	2	1	1	0	5	2	4
Oriente	2	1	0	1	3	4	3
San Jose	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Bolivar	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
The Strongest	2	0	0	2	2	6	0

BRAZIL

Oct 21: Sao Caetano 2 Fluminense 2; Brasiliense 1 Goias 2.
Oct 22: Sao Paulo 1 Santos 2; Juventude 2 Internacional 1; Figueirense 4 Ponte Preta 0; Fortaleza 1 Palmeiras 1; Vasco da Gama 2 Flamengo 1; Atletico Paranaense 2 Atletico Mineiro 0; Botafogo 2 Coritiba 0; Cruzeiro 4 Paysandu 3; Corinthians 1 Parana 0.
Oct 24: Sao Paulo 1 Corinthians 1*; Fluminense 1 Brasiliense 1*.
Oct 25: Coritiba 0 Cruzeiro 3; Goias 0 Internacional 1.
Oct 26: Juventude 2 Flamengo 2; Vasco da Gama 1 Santos 3; Atletico Mineiro 2 Fortaleza 3; Palmeiras 2 Figueirense 2.
Oct 27: Sao Paulo 1 Brasiliense 2; Ponte Preta 0 Botafogo 1; Paysandu 0 Corinthians 2; Fluminense 4 Atletico Paranaense 1.
Oct 28: Parana 1 Sao Caetano 3; Internacional 3 Coritiba 2*.
Oct 29: Figueirense 4 Juventude 3; Fortaleza 1 Goias 1.
Oct 30: Santos 1 Cruzeiro 2; Sao Caetano 0 Sao Paulo 1; Atletico Paranaense 2 Parana 1; Fluminense 4 Ponte Preta 3; Atletico Mineiro 1 Palmeiras 3; Corinthians 1 Vasco da Gama 1; Brasiliense 0 Botafogo 0.
Oct 31: Internacional 1 Paysandu 0; Flamengo 2 Coritiba 1.
Nov 2: Sao Paulo 2 Atletico Mineiro 2; Juventude 2 Fortaleza 0; Ponte Preta 2 Santos 1; Cruzeiro 2 Corinthians 1; Goias 1 Fluminense 2.
Nov 3: Parana 3 Internacional 1; Paysandu 2 Brasiliense 1; Vasco da Gama 2 Atletico Paranaense 1; Coritiba 4 Figueirense 1; Botafogo 1 Sao Caetano 0; Palmeiras 0 Flamengo 1.
Nov 5: Sao Paulo 3 Juventude 1; Fortaleza 3 Cruzeiro 1.
Nov 6: Internacional 2 Ponte Preta 1; Parana 2 Paysandu 0; Sao Caetano 1 Vasco da Gama 2; Flamengo 3 Botafogo 1; Atletico Paranaense 4 Palmeiras 0; Fluminense 2 Figueirense 0; Atletico Mineiro 1 Goias 2; Corinthians 7 Santos 1; Brasiliense 1 Coritiba 1.

Nov 12: Figueirense 1 Fortaleza 0; Paysandu 0 Atletico Mineiro 2; Botafogo 2 Parana 0; Palmeiras 2 Sao Paulo 1.
Nov 13: Santos 0 Internacional 4; Juventude 3 Sao Caetano 1; Ponte Preta 2 Flamengo 2; Vasco da Gama 2 Fluminense 0; Coritiba 0 Corinthians 1; Cruzeiro 1 Brasiliense 0; Goias 4 Atletico Paranaense 2.
Nov 16: Santos 0 Parana 0; Internacional 1 Brasiliense 0; Figueirense 5 Vasco da Gama 1; Sao Caetano 1 Corinthians 0; Flamengo 3 Fortaleza 0; Palmeiras 3 Juventude 2; Goias 3 Sao Paulo 0.
Nov 17: Paysandu 2 Botafogo 0; Coritiba 2 Ponte Preta 1; Fluminense 0 Atletico Mineiro 2; Cruzeiro 1 Atletico Paranaense 2.

BRAZIL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Corinthians	39	23	8	8	81	54	77
Internacional	39	22	8	9	69	46	74
Goias	39	21	7	11	64	47	70
Fluminense	39	19	11	9	75	60	68
Palmeiras	39	18	10	11	71	59	64
Cruzeiro	39	17	9	13	71	65	60
Parana	39	16	10	13	56	47	58
At Paranaense	39	17	6	16	70	60	57
Santos	39	15	11	13	65	66	56
Botafogo	39	15	8	16	52	53	53
Sao Paulo	39	14	10	15	70	63	52
Fortaleza	39	14	7	18	52	61	49
Juventude	39	13	10	16	61	67	49
Vasco da Gama	39	13	10	16	67	83	49
Ponte Preta	39	14	6	19	57	70	48
Flamengo	39	12	12	15	51	59	48
Sao Caetano	39	13	8	18	48	56	47
Figueirense	39	12	11	16	58	67	47
Coritiba	39	12	9	18	49	58	45
Paysandu	39	12	5	22	60	81	41
At Mineiro	39	11	7	21	50	58	40
Brasiliense	39	9	11	19	45	62	38

The results of all 11 matches refereed by Edilson Pereira de Carvalho this season were annulled and the games ordered to be replayed because of his involvement in a match-fixing ring. Those games marked with an asterisk are the replays

CHILE

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP
Regular season

Oct 22: Dep La Serena 2 Puerto Montt 0; Huachipato 3 Dep Concepcion 1; San Felipe 1 Cobreloa 1; Union Espanola 1 Colo Colo 3; Dep Temuco 1 Santiago Wanderers 0; U de Concepcion 1 Coquimbo Unido 1; Rangers 2 Palestino 2; Everton 2 Audax Italiano 1.
Oct 23: Dep Melipilla 0 U Catolica 1; U de Chile 1 Cobresal 1.
Oct 25: Colo Colo 5 San Felipe 0.
Oct 26: Puerto Montt 1 U de Concepcion 2; Cobreloa 4 Union Espanola 1; Huachipato 5 Dep Temuco 1; Santiago Wanderers 2 Coquimbo Unido 0; Palestino 3 Dep La Serena 4; Audax Italiano 1 U de Chile 1; Dep Melipilla 4 Rangers 1; U Catolica 1 Cobresal 0.
Oct 27: Dep Concepcion 2 Everton 1.
Oct 29: Dep Temuco 1 U de Chile 2; Audax Italiano 3 Puerto Montt 3; Dep La Serena 1 Cobreloa 0.
Oct 30: San Felipe 2 Dep Melipilla 0; U de Concepcion 3 Dep Concepcion 3; Colo Colo 1 Santiago Wanderers 1; Coquimbo Unido 0 Huachipato 1; Cobresal 1 Palestino 1; Union Espanola 2 Rangers 1; Everton 1 U Catolica 2.
Nov 1: U de Chile 1 Everton 1.
Nov 2: Cobresal 2 Audax Italiano 1; U Catolica 5 San Felipe 1; Dep Concepcion 2 Union Espanola 1.
Nov 3: Cobreloa 0 Colo Colo 1; Rangers 1 Huachipato 1.
Nov 4: Coquimbo Unido 2 Dep Melipilla 1.
Nov 5: Dep La Serena 2 U de Chile 3; Union Espanola 0 U Catolica 0.
Nov 6: Rangers 0 Cobreloa 1; San Felipe 2 Audax Italiano 0; Huachipato 2 Santiago Wanderers 1; Dep Temuco 4 Puerto Montt 1; Everton 0 Palestino 0; U de Concepcion 4 Cobresal 1; Colo Colo 2 Dep Concepcion 1.
Nov 12: Dep Melipilla 1 U de Concepcion 2; Palestino 1 Dep Temuco 0; Santiago Wanderers 0 Dep La Serena 0.
Nov 13: Puerto Montt 1 Coquimbo Unido 0; U Catolica 2 U de Chile 1.

CHILE – CLOSING – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U Catolica	18	14	4	0	30	3	46
Huachipato	18	10	4	4	30	18	34
Dep Concepcion	18	8	6	4	25	23	30
San Felipe	18	6	5	7	23	30	23
Puerto Montt	18	5	3	10	17	30	18

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Chile	18	10	5	3	31	24	35
Dep La Serena	18	6	6	6	24	21	24
Everton	18	4	8	6	22	22	20
S Wanderers	18	5	5	8	14	22	20
Dep Temuco	18	6	1	11	16	36	19

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cobresal	18	7	4	7	28	24	25
Cobreloa	18	5	5	8	21	20	20
Palestino	18	4	8	6	23	26	20
Rangers	18	4	6	8	24	30	18
Audax Italiano	18	4	6	8	20	27	18

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Colo Colo	18	12	5	1	44	15	41
U Concepcion	18	7	3	8	25	27	24
Union Espanola	18	5	6	7	25	30	21
Dep Melipilla	18	6	2	10	15	20	20
Coquimbo U'do	18	3	6	9	18	27	15

COLOMBIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP
Regular season

Oct 22: Indep Santa Fe 1 At Junior 0.
Oct 23: Tolima 4 Envigado 1; Bucaramanga 1 Chico 1; Dep Cali 2 At Huila 0; Magdalena 1 Millonarios 1; At Nacional 0 Pereira 0; Once Caldas 3 Indep Medellin 0; Dep Pasto 2 America 0; Quindio 1 Real Cartagena 0.
Oct 29: America 2 Indep Santa Fe 2.
Oct 30: Chico 1 Envigado 0; At Huila 0 Bucaramanga 3; At Junior 1 Once Caldas 0; Indep Medellin 1 At Nacional 1; Millonarios 1 Dep Cali 2; Pereira 3 Magdalena 0; Quindio 1 Tolima 0.
Oct 31: Real Cartagena 1 Dep Pasto 0.
Nov 6: Tolima 1 Chico 1; Envigado 1 At Huila 1; Bucaramanga 2 Millonarios 2; Dep Cali 3 Pereira 0; Magdalena 0 Indep Medellin 2; Once Caldas 1 America 0; At Nacional 0 At Junior 1; Indep Santa Fe 1 Real Cartagena 0; Dep Pasto 1 Quindio 0.

COLOMBIA – CLOSING: REGULAR SEASON – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Cali	18	8	6	4	30	23	30
Indep Medellin	18	9	2	7	28	23	29
America	18	9	2	7	24	20	29
Pereira	18	9	2	7	27	26	29
At Junior	18	9	2	7	22	27	29
Real Cartagena	18	8	5	5	26	19	29
Once Caldas	18	8	5	5	25	21	29
Indep Santa Fe	18	8	5	5	20	17	29
Tolima	18	8	3	7	24	18	27
Bucaramanga	18	7	6	5	24	16	27
At Nacional	18	6	8	4	22	16	26
Dep Pasto	18	7	4	7	20	18	25
Quindio	18	7	4	7	18	19	25
Millonarios	18	7	3	8	22	21	24
Envigado	18	5	6	7	20	22	21
At Huila	18	4	4	10	18	32	16
Chico	18	3	6	9	12	24	15
Magdalena	18	0	7	11	15	35	7

Top eight qualified for play-offs

Play-offs

Nov 12: America 1 At Junior 1.
Nov 13: Once Caldas 0 Dep Cali 1; Indep Medellin 2 Pereira 1; Indep Santa Fe 1 Real Cartagena 1.
Nov 16: At Junior 1 Once Caldas 0; Pereira 1 Indep Santa Fe 0; Real Cartagena 1 Indep Medellin 0.
Nov 17: Dep Cali 0 America 0.

CLOSING PLAY-OFFS – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
At Junior	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Dep Cali	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
America	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Once Caldas	2	0	0	2	0	2	0

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Cartagena	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Indep Medellin	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Pereira	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Indep Santa Fe	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

ECUADOR

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP
Regular season

Oct 22: LDU Loja 2 Dep Cuenca 2.
Oct 23: Aucas 2 Emelec 1; El Nacional 1 Dep Quito 2; Olmedo 0 LDU Quito 3; Barcelona 0 Espoli 1.
Oct 26: Emelec 0 El Nacional 0; Aucas 1 Espoli 2; LDU Quito 3 Barcelona 0; Dep Quito 1 LDU Loja 1; Dep Cuenca 0 Olmedo 1.
Oct 30: El Nacional 2 Aucas 4; Olmedo 2 Dep Quito 2; LDU Loja 4 Emelec 0; Espoli 2 LDU Quito 0; Barcelona 5 Dep Cuenca 2.
Nov 2: Dep Cuenca 1 Espoli 0.
Nov 3: Dep Quito 1 LDU Quito 1; El Nacional 4 Barcelona 1; Aucas 4 LDU Loja 0; Emelec 1 Olmedo 1.
Nov 6: Olmedo 0 Aucas 1; LDU Loja 1 El Nacional 7; Barcelona 2 Dep Quito 0; Espoli 4 Emelec 1; LDU Quito 2 Dep Cuenca 0.

ECUADOR – CLOSING: REGULAR SEASON – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
El Nacional	18	9	4	5	42	27	31
Aucas	18	9	2	7	28	21	29
Olmedo	18	7	6	5	25	23	27
Dep Cuenca	18	6	9	3	19	19	27
LDU Quito	18	7	5	6	25	20	26
Barcelona	18	7	5	6	26	25	26
Espoli	18	7	2	9	29	31	23
Dep Quito	18	5	8	5	21	27	23
Emelec	18	5	6	7	20	25	21
LDU Loja	18	2	5	11	22	39	11

Top six qualified for play-offs

Play-offs

Nov 16: Aucas 1 Olmedo 1; Dep Cuenca 0 LDU Quito 0.
Nov 17: Barcelona 0 El Nacional 0.

CLOSING PLAY-OFFS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
El Nacional*	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
Aucas*	1	0	1	0	1	1	3
Olmedo*	1	0	1	0	1	1	2
Barcelona	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Dep Cuenca	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
LDU Quito	1	0	1	0	0	0	1

**El Nacional, Aucas and Olmedo received 3, 2 and 1 bonus points respectively for finishing 1st, 2nd and 3rd in regular season*

PARAGUAY

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 21: Libertad 4 Guarani 1; 12 de Octubre 1 Cerro Porteno 1.
Oct 22: Olimpia 3 Tacuary 0; 3 de Febrero 3 Nacional 2; General Caballero 0 Sportivo Luqueno 1.
Oct 26: Cerro Porteno 1 3 de Febrero 1; Guarani 0 12 de Octubre 0; Sportivo Luqueno 1 Libertad 1; Tacuary 1 General Caballero 0; Nacional 1 Olimpia 3.
Oct 29: Libertad 3 Tacuary 1; 3 de Febrero 3 Olimpia 2.
Oct 30: Cerro Porteno 1 Guarani 0.
Oct 31: General Caballero 0 Nacional 1; 12 de Octubre 1 Sportivo Luqueno 1.
Nov 4: Olimpia 1 General Caballero 0.
Nov 5: Nacional 1 Libertad 1.
Nov 6: Guarani 0 3 de Febrero 1; Cerro Porteno 4 Sportivo Luqueno 2; Tacuary 1 12 de Octubre 1.

PARAGUAY – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olimpia	14	8	3	3	24	13	27
Libertad	14	7	4	3	24	15	25
Cerro Porteno	14	7	3	4	25	18	24
3 de Febrero	14	6	3	5	20	17	21
Nacional	14	5	6	3	16	13	21
Sp Luqueno	14	4	6	4	18	22	18
Tacuary	14	4	6	4	18	22	18
Guarani	14	4	2	8	13	19	14
12 de Octubre	14	1	8	5	12	22	11
Gen Caballero	14	3	1	10	11	20	10

PERU

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 19: Cienciano 3 Alianza Atletico 1.
Oct 22: Sporting Cristal 2 Universidad SMP 2; Melgar 2 Alianza Lima 0.
Oct 23: Universitario 2 Sport Boys 0; Alianza Atletico 2 Sport Ancash 2; Cienciano 3 Universidad CV 2; Union Huaral 1 Coronel Bolognesi 2.
Oct 26: Alianza Atletico 4 Sport Boys 3; Cienciano 2 Universidad SMP 2; Union Huaral 2 Universidad CV 1; Melgar 0 Coronel Bolognesi 1; Sporting Cristal 3 Sport Ancash 1; Universitario 1 At Universidad 0.
Oct 29: Coronel Bolognesi 3 Alianza Lima 2; At Universidad 2 Alianza Atletico 1; Sport Ancash 0 Cienciano 1; Universidad CV 1 Melgar 2.
Oct 30: Universidad SMP 1 Union Huaral 1; Sport Boys 0 Sporting Cristal 1.
Nov 2: Alianza Atletico 0 Universitario 1; Melgar 0 Universidad SMP 2; Union Huaral 2 Sport Ancash 1; Cienciano 5 Sport Boys 1; Sporting Cristal 2 At Universidad 0.
Nov 3: Alianza Lima 0 Universidad CV 1.
Nov 5: At Universidad 0 Cienciano 0; Sporting Cristal 2 Universitario 1.
Nov 6: Universidad SMP 0 Alianza Lima 3; Universidad CV 1 Coronel Bolognesi 2; Sport Boys 1 Union Huaral 0; Sport Ancash 2 Melgar 2.
Nov 12: Sporting Cristal 5 Alianza Atletico 1; Coronel Bolognesi 1 Universidad SMP 2; Melgar 1 Sport Boys 0.
Nov 13: Cienciano 1 Universitario 1; Alianza Lima 3 Sport Ancash 0; Union Huaral 1 At Universidad 2.
Nov 16: Sport Boys 1 Alianza Lima 0; Sport Ancash 3 Coronel Bolognesi 1; Universidad SMP 0 Universidad CV 0; Alianza Atletico 1 Cienciano 0; Universitario 3 Union Huaral 0; At Universidad 0 Melgar 3.

PERU – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting Cristal	17	12	5	0	30	7	41
Univ SMP	18	9	6	3	31	16	33
C Bolognesi	17	11	0	6	27	21	33
Universitario	17	8	4	5	23	15	28
Melgar	18	8	4	6	22	27	28
Cienciano	18	7	4	7	25	26	25
Sport Ancash	18	7	4	7	21	24	25
At Universidad	18	7	3	8	23	26	24
Alianza Atletico	17	6	3	8	20	26	21
Sport Boys	18	5	5	8	16	23	20
Univ CV	17	4	3	10	18	27	15
Union Huaral	18	4	2	12	13	27	14
Alianza Lima	17	3	3	11	13	17	12

URUGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 22: Nacional 0 River Plate 0; Paysandu 1 Cerro 1; Cerrito 2 Rampla Juniors 3.
Oct 23: Defensor 1 Fenix 2; Liverpool 1 Penarol 2; Miramar Misiones 3 Danubio 3; Dep Colonia 1 Wanderers 1; Rentistas 1 Tacuarembo 3; Rocha 3 Plaza 0.
Oct 29: Dep Colonia 0 Nacional 0; Rocha 2 Cerrito 0; Cerro 2 Plaza 0.
Oct 30: Tacuarembo 1 Defensor 0; Fenix 0 Liverpool 1; Miramar Misiones 0 Paysandu 0; Wanderers 1 Danubio 2; Rampla Juniors 1 River Plate 4; Rentistas 3 Penarol 0.
Nov 2: Rocha 2 Nacional 4; Defensor 2 Rentistas 2; Liverpool 1 Cerro 1; Paysandu 2 Fenix 2; Danubio 3 Dep Colonia 0; River Plate 0 Wanderers 0; Cerrito 1 Miramar Misiones 1; Penarol 1 Rampla Juniors 0; Plaza 1 Tacuarembo 0.
Nov 5: Dep Colonia 0 Plaza 0; Rentistas 1 Cerrito 3; Penarol 2 Danubio 7; Rampla Juniors 1 Defensor 2.
Nov 6: Miramar Misiones 1 Cerro 0; Paysandu 2 Rocha 3; River Plate 4 Fenix 2; Liverpool 0 Tacuarembo 0; Nacional 5 Wanderers 1.

URUGUAY – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional*	12	8	3	1	25	10	24
Rocha	12	7	1	4	22	15	22
Penarol	12	6	3	3	17	18	21
River Plate	12	5	5	2	17	11	20
Rentistas	12	6	1	5	14	13	19
Dep Colonia	12	4	6	2	16	16	18
Danubio	12	5	2	5	22	15	17
Liverpool	12	4	5	3	16	14	17
Tacuarembo	12	4	5	3	9	9	17
Cerrito	12	4	4	4	14	15	16
M Misiones	12	3	6	3	14	11	15
Wanderers	12	3	6	3	19	22	15
Rampla Jnrs	12	4	2	6	22	20	14
Cerro	12	3	5	4	15	18	14
Defensor	12	2	5	5	10	14	11
Plaza	12	2	5	5	9	20	11
Fenix	12	1	4	7	14	22	7
Paysandu	12	1	4	7	11	23	7

**3pts deducted for crowd trouble during home game against Penarol in the 2004 closing championship*

VENEZUELA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 22: Trujillanos 2 Aragua 1; Caracas 1 Dep Tachira 3.
Oct 23: Monagas 0 UA Maracaibo 0; ItalMaracaibo 1 Mineros Guayana 1; Carabobo 2 Estudiantes 2.
Oct 29: Dep Tachira 2 ItalMaracaibo 1; Aragua 3 Estudiantes 1; Trujillanos 1 Monagas 1.
Oct 30: Mineros Guayana 2 Carabobo 2; UA Maracaibo 2 Caracas 1.
Nov 6: Monagas 0 Aragua 1; Caracas 4 Trujillanos 1; ItalMaracaibo 0 UA Maracaibo 1; Carabobo 1 Dep Tachira 2; Estudiantes 1 Mineros Guayana 1.
Nov 12: Dep Tachira 3 Estudiantes 2; Aragua 1 Mineros Guayana 2; Trujillanos 0 ItalMaracaibo 1.
Nov 13: UA Maracaibo 1 Carabobo 1; Monagas 3 Caracas 4.
Nov 16: Mineros Guayana 1 Caracas 1.

VENEZUELA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
UA Maracaibo	13	8	4	1	20	10	28
Dep Tachira	13	8	2	3	26	18	26
Aragua	13	6	2	5	14	16	20
ItalMaracaibo	13	5	3	5	14	14	18
Carabobo	13	4	5	4	18	18	17
Mineros G'ana	13	3	6	4	14	16	15
Caracas	13	4	2	7	18	20	14
Trujillanos	13	3	5	5	10	13	14
Estudiantes	13	3	5	5	16	20	14
Monagas	13	2	4	7	13	18	10

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

MEXICO

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 22: Toluca 1 Atlante 0; Morelia 1 Santos 0; Cruz Azul 3 San Luis 0; Monterrey 1 Necaxa 1; Jaguares 5 Pumas UNAM 1; Atlas 1 Dorados 2.
Oct 23: America 1 Veracruz 2; Tecos UAG 1 Tigres 1; Pachuca 0 Guadalajara 0.
Oct 29: Atlante 1 Jaguares 1; Dorados 0 Tecos UAG 2; Guadalajara 1 Morelia 2; Veracruz 0 Cruz Azul 1; Tigres 1 Toluca 3; Necaxa 2 Pachuca 1.
Oct 30: Pumas UNAM 1 America 2; San Luis 1 Monterrey 2; Santos 2 Atlas 2.
Nov 4: Tecos UAG 3 Santos 2.
Nov 5: Toluca 2 Dorados 2; Jaguares 1 Tigres 1; Monterrey 1 Veracruz 1; Morelia 3 Necaxa 4; Atlas 2 Guadalajara 2.
Nov 6: Pumas UNAM 2 Atlante 3; America 1 Cruz Azul 0; Pachuca 0 San Luis 0.

MEXICO – OPENING – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America	15	11	2	2	29	15	35
Necaxa	15	9	4	2	30	23	31
Tecos UAG	15	6	3	6	24	25	21
Morelia	15	5	2	8	24	26	17
San Luis	15	3	4	8	16	23	13
Atlante	15	3	3	9	24	33	12

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Toluca	15	8	3	4	23	17	27
Pachuca	15	6	6	3	23	17	24
Santos	15	4	5	6	26	25	17
Veracruz	15	3	6	6	22	29	15
Dorados	15	4	3	8	18	28	15
Pumas UNAM	15	3	4	8	14	31	13

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruz Azul	15	9	2	4	33	18	29
Monterrey	15	8	5	2	26	18	29
Jaguares	15	4	8	3	24	24	20
Tigres	15	5	4	6	27	22	19
Guadalajara	15	3	7	5	15	19	16
Atlas	15	4	3	8	16	21	15

LEADING GOALSCORERS
9 Sebastian Abreu (Dorados)
9 Cesar Delgado (Cruz Azul)

UNITED STATES

Championship play-offs

Quarter-finals, 1st legs

Oct 21: Chicago Fire 0 DC United 0.
Oct 22: MetroStars 1 New England Revolution 0; Colorado Rapids 0 FC Dallas 0.
Oct 23: Los Angeles Galaxy 3 San Jose Earthquakes 1.

Quarter-finals, 2nd legs

Oct 29: New England Revolution 3 MetroStars 1 *New England 3-2 on agg*; FC Dallas 2 Colorado Rapids 2 (aet) *Agg 2-2. Colorado 5-4 on pens*; San Jose Earthquakes 1 Los Angeles Galaxy 1 *Los Angeles 4-2 on agg.*
Oct 30: DC United 0 Chicago Fire 4 *Chicago 4-0 on agg.*

Semi-finals

Nov 5: Colorado Rapids 0 Los Angeles Galaxy 2.
Nov 6: New England Revolution 1 Chicago Fire 0.

Final (MLS Cup)

Nov 13 - Pizza Hut Park, Frisco
Los Angeles Galaxy 1 (Ramirez 107)
New England Revolution 0
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 0-0. **Att:** 21,193. **Ref:** Stott

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Final, 1st leg

Oct 29 - Sousse
Etoile Sahel (Tun) 0
Al Ahly (Egy) 0
Ref: El-Arjoun (Mor)
Etoile Sahel: Ejide - Sellami, Ben Frej, Ghezal, K Zouaghi, Hammi, C Zouaghi, Bokri (Traoui 81), Jedidi, Gilson, Opara (Chikhaoui 62; Trabelsi 85).
Al Ahly: El-Hadary - El-Shater, El-Nahhas, Gomaa, El-Sayed, Barakat, Shawky, Gilberto, Moustafa, Aboutraika (Hosni 90), Moteab.

Final, 2nd leg

Nov 12 - Cairo
Al Ahly 3 (Aboutraika 20, Hosni 52, Barakat 90)
Etoile Sahel 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Pare (BuF)
Al Ahly 3-0 on agg
Al Ahly: El-Hadary - El-Sayed, Gomaa, El-Nahhas, Shawky, Barakat, Gilberto (Abdelwahed 32), Moustafa, Moteab, Hosni (El-Shater 66), Aboutraika.
Etoile Sahel: Ejide - Ghezal, Ben Frej, Sellami, K Zouaghi, Bokri (Ben Nasr 67), C Zouaghi, Hammi, Jedidi (Trabelsi 77), Gilson, Opara (Chikhaoui 53).

AFRICAN CONFEDERATION CUP

Final, 1st leg

Nov 6 - Port Harcourt
Dolphin (Nig) 1 (Bello 85)
FAR Rabat (Mor) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Sillah (Gam)

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Final, 1st leg

Oct 26 - Al Ain
Al Ain (UAE) 1 (Msarri 50)
Al Ittihad (Sau) 1 (Kallon pen 85)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Kwon (SKo)

Final, 2nd leg

Nov 5 - Jeddah
Al Ittihad 4 (Kallon 3, Noor 33, Job 57, Dukhi 69)
Al Ain 2 (Ahmed 55, Tejada 90)
HT: 2-0
Al Ittihad 5-3 on agg

AFC CUP

Final, 1st leg

Oct 19 - Amman
Al Faisaly (Jor) 1 (Saed 36)
Al Nijmeh (Leb) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000

Final, 2nd leg

Oct 26 - Beirut
Al Nijmeh 2 (Hjeij pen 35, 74)
Al Faisaly 3 (Saed 20, 59, Qassem 90)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 20,000
Sent off: Dekmak (Al Nijmeh) 27min; Al-Shboul (Al Faisaly) 27min
Al Faisaly 4-2 on agg

CHINA

CHINA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dalian	26	21	2	3	57	18	65
Shanghai Sh'ua	26	15	8	3	41	23	53
Shandong	26	15	7	4	47	30	52
Tianjin	26	14	7	5	48	26	49
Wuhan	26	11	9	6	34	26	42
Beijing H'dai	26	12	4	10	46	32	40
Qingdao	26	9	7	10	26	31	34
Shanghai Intl	26	8	7	11	30	32	31
Sichuan	26	8	5	13	28	45	29
Liaoning	26	7	8	11	34	42	29
Shanghai Zobon	26	5	7	14	18	35	22
Shenzhen	26	4	10	12	22	42	22
Shenyang	26	4	6	16	19	43	18
Chongqing	26	2	7	17	16	41	13

JAPAN

Oct 22: Kashima Antlers 1 Nagoya Grampus Eight 0; Omiya Ardija 1 Urawa Reds 3; JEF United 4 Vissel Kobe 0; Tokyo Verdy 1969 1 FC Tokyo 2; Albirex Niigata 1 Yokohama F Marinos 0; Shimizu S-Pulse 1 Jubilo Iwata 1; Gamba Osaka 1 Oita Trinita 2.
Oct 23: Kawasaki Frontale 3 Kashiwa Reysol 1; Sanfrecce Hiroshima 1 Cerezo Osaka 2.
Oct 29: Urawa Reds 3 Kawasaki Frontale 2; Kashiwa Reysol 1 Omiya Ardija 2; Yokohama F Marinos 1 Tokyo Verdy 1969 0; Jubilo Iwata 1 Sanfrecce Hiroshima 3; Nagoya Grampus Eight 1 Shimizu S-Pulse 2; Vissel Kobe 1 Albirex Niigata 1; Oita Trinita 0 JEF United 1.
Oct 30: FC Tokyo 2 Gamba Osaka 1; Cerezo Osaka 0 Kashima Antlers 0.
Nov 12: Kashima Antlers 1 FC Tokyo 1; Omiya Ardija 3 Nagoya Grampus Eight 2; JEF United 2 Jubilo Iwata 2; Tokyo Verdy 1969 0 Cerezo Osaka 1; Kawasaki Frontale 3 Vissel Kobe 1; Albirex Niigata 2 Kashiwa Reysol 2; Shimizu S-Pulse 0 Yokohama F Marinos 1; Gamba Osaka 2 Urawa Reds 1; Sanfrecce Hiroshima 0 Oita Trinita 4.

JAPAN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gamba Osaka	30	17	6	7	76	51	57
Kashima Antlers	30	15	9	6	54	34	54
Cerezo Osaka	30	15	8	7	42	36	53
Urawa Reds	30	14	8	8	56	35	50
JEF United	30	13	11	6	50	38	50
K'saki Frontale	30	15	4	11	51	38	49
Jubilo Iwata	30	12	9	9	46	37	45
Sanfrecce H	30	11	10	9	43	36	43
Yokohama FM	30	10	10	10	34	37	40
FC Tokyo	30	9	12	9	37	36	39
Oita Trinita	30	11	5	14	38	36	38
Albirex Niigata	30	9	9	12	43	55	36
Grampus Eight	30	9	8	13	40	45	35
Omiya Ardija	30	10	4	16	35	47	34
Shimizu S-Pulse	30	7	11	12	34	43	32
Kashiwa Reysol	30	7	10	13	33	47	31
Tokyo Verdy	30	5	11	14	34	62	26
Vissel Kobe	30	4	9	17	28	61	21

SOUTH KOREA

SECOND STAGE

Oct 22: Busan 2 Incheon 3.
Oct 23: Daejeon 2 Chonbuk 1; Gwangju 0 Pohang 3; Daegu 1 Bucheon 2; Suwon 0 Seoul 3; Chunnam 0 Songnam 2.
Oct 29: Pohang 2 Ulsan 1.
Oct 30: Songnam 2 Gwangju 1; Incheon 0 Daejeon 1; Seoul 2 Busan 0; Bucheon 2 Suwon 1; Chonbuk 1 Chunnam 0.
Nov 6: Daejeon 0 Seoul 0; Gwangju 0 Chonbuk 0; Ulsan 0 Songnam 0; Suwon 0 Daegu 0; Busan 0 Bucheon 1; Chunnam 0 Incheon 1.
Nov 9: Songnam 2 Pohang 2; Chonbuk 2 Ulsan 3; Incheon 1 Gwangju 2; Seoul 2 Chunnam 3; Bucheon 1 Daejeon 1; Daegu 2 Busan 2.

SOUTH KOREA – SECOND STAGE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Songnam	12	8	3	1	22	9	27
Bucheon	12	8	2	2	16	8	26
Daegu	12	6	3	3	15	11	21
Ulsan	12	6	3	3	15	11	21
Incheon	12	6	3	3	16	13	21
Pohang	12	5	4	3	14	11	19
Daejeon	12	4	4	4	8	9	16
Suwon	12	3	5	4	11	13	14
Seoul	12	3	4	5	15	13	13
Chunnam	12	4	1	7	10	15	13
Gwangju	12	3	2	7	7	15	11
Chonbuk	12	2	3	7	11	22	9
Busan	12	0	3	9	11	21	3

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International comebacks

A RETURN TO the international stage has proved irresistible for some of the world's leading players in the past few months. Luis Figo, Pavel Nedved, Zinedine Zidane, Claude Makelele and Lilian Thuram have all been persuaded to come out of international retirement to take part in their respective team's World Cup qualifying campaigns.

The Czechs are hoping Nedved can be persuaded to turn his one-off return for the play-off games against Norway into something more permanent and hope to include him in the squad for Germany. The Juventus midfielder has yet to decide whether to accept the invitation to play in his first – and last – World Cup finals.

Bizarrely, Zidane said he returned after hearing voices in the middle of the night which compelled him to play again for France. Cynics suggested the voices were those of sponsors Adidas and Orange, something Zidane dismissed.

Henrik Larsson ended his two-year self-imposed exile from the Swedish national team – broken only by an emergency call-up in April 2003 – on the eve of Euro 2004. He then scored three times at the tournament. An extensive campaign had persuaded him to reconsider his decision to retire. He was sent a 140,000-name petition, and appeals were also made by Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson and UEFA's Swedish president Lennart Johansson. But what really swayed Larsson were comments from his young son Jordan that he wanted to see his dad play for Sweden again.

Paul Breitner, the resident Maoist of the German national side during

Mao and more…Paul Breitner

the 1970s, regularly clashed with coach Helmut Schon and captain Franz Beckenbauer before throwing in the international towel in 1975 to concentrate on his club career at Real Madrid. Seven years later, he was back and skippered West Germany to runners-up spot at the 1982 World Cup.

German midfielder/libero Lothar Matthaus called it quits when rupturing an Achilles tendon in early 1995 and kept to his word for three years before answering a call from coach Berti Vogts to return as the replacement for injured sweeper Matthias Sammer. But it was not a particularly happy return for the 1990 World Cup-winning captain. His form was only average and many team-mates were openly unhappy with his presence in the side.

Wilfried Van Moer, the highly-influential little Belgian midfield general, announced his international retirement in the mid-1970s after a long series of injuries. But he was lured back at the ripe old age of 34 by coach Guy Thys, and how well it worked. The veteran was the

Strategy for success…Wilfried Van Moer

strategist of the side that reached the 1980 European Championship Final, which they lost to West Germany.

Cameroon striker extraordinaire Roger Milla angrily quit the side in 1988 after claiming his federation had reneged on promises to pay the hospital bills of his seriously ill mother. A charm offensive from state president Paul Biya convinced Milla to turn out at Italia 90, and he

Goal-den oldie…Roger Milla

duly scored four times as the Indomitable Lions sensationally reached the last eight. At 38, Milla was the oldest man to score at a World Cup finals.

In October 1992, great Italian sweeper Franco Baresi announced his international retirement, talking of a "choice of lifestyle". Just 32 days later, he concluded he wanted a different life and made himself available for selection again. With Baresi back on board, Italy finished runners-up to Brazil at USA 94.

George Best earned a shock recall to the Northern Ireland squad for a World Cup qualifier against Holland in October 1976, three years after his last appearance and having just turned 30. The then Fulham star rolled back the years with a fine performance in the 2-2 draw against Cruyff, Neeskens and co. But Best would play only four more internationals, taking him to a total of 37 caps. What a waste.

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